1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954

MR13 Fellahin MR13

Silwa

FOLK LIFE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE VILLAGE

771 Notions connected with life and death are, on the whole, mixed up with
761 religion. To die on holy days, such as Fridays or in the month of Ramadan,
[796] is a sign of God's blessing.

Sanctity shows itself also in status and rank and their role in the com-
771 munity. According to the villagers, the 'ashraf' (people of distinguished
descent being related to the Prophet) have a better chance of salvation
554 than others, a notion which, of course, satisfies the villagers' ego as they
[783] consider themselves descendants of the Prophet. The persistence of the
religious prerogatives of the 'ashraf' goes to show that the central concep-
[779] tion of Islam in the equality of all believers has not entirely supplanted the
Arab reverence for distinguished genealogy.

771 The villagers' attitude of respect for religious men is based on two prin-
ciples. The first is that of knowledge of Koranic studies, combined with
792 observation of religious duties; the second is derived from hereditary piety,
as recognized piety is believed to be handed from father to son. The
example of the two pious men acknowledged and venerated as such by the
villagers is perhaps the best illustration. One of these two pious sheikhs
[776] is the son of the villagers' deceased saint around whose shrine the tombs
of the villagers' cemetery is spread. As this sheikh does not live in the
[778] village, he frequently comes to it either for an ordinary visit, for taking
[764] part in settling serious disputes between individuals or families, or to
collect his annual custom of crops offered to him by the villagers during
harvest time. During his stay he moves from one guest house to another
as the guest of a clan or a family which endeavours to provide hospitality
for him and thus win his approval. In return, the sheikh is requested to
[788] write charms, or to bless water, or to read over a sick person, and thus
secure his 'baraka'.[1]

The piety of the other religious man is based also on the fact that he is
[795] the grandson of a man who was one of the favourite disciples of the chief
founder of the Nakshbadia mystic sect. His grandfather is reputed to have
done miraculous deeds and had composed mystic verses usually recited
amongst the members of the sect. His piety is also based on the grounds
that he studied at al-Azhar Mosque and thus he is considered to be well
versed in Koranic studies. It was because of his piety that he gained most
of the votes in Silwa, when he stood as a candidate for the Parliament as
mentioned earlier.

It is also recognized that people who know the sacred book by heart
should be venerated as the carriers of knowledge, and many people regard
them as possessed of 'baraka'. In Arab councils, religious men are always
[623] included, and their decisions are usually respected.

771 Moreover, the main events of life and death have their religious signifi-
[553] cance or at least their sanction. It is in the Prophet's tradition to celebrate
[304] the naming ceremony, to circumcise children, and to get them married.

---

[581] [1] This sheikh died during my field work and a delegation from the village went to his
village in condolence.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954

MR13 Fellahin MR13

Silwa

177 customs like the people in Silwa. The visiting priest who comes yearly to
369 the village is certainly welcome on his arrival, and people flock to him for
advice on religious matters. On attending one of these meetings, the writer
[788] was struck by the number of questions that those present put to him con-
[779] cerning the details of prayers, e.g. whether one lifts his hand up to his
shoulder or up to his ears, how one sits on after prostration, what one
might say before and after prayers. Other questions that arose were queries
about whether certain sayings or deeds were considered to be religiously
approved or disapproved, how and to whom one would make a sacrifice
oath, whether visiting saints' tombs is a good thing or not, and so forth.

Village life, on the whole, whether in religious or social spheres, is very
[796] ritually and ceremonially conscious, and almost invulnerable on this level.
Greeting, hospitality, eating, praying, exchange of social obligations, cir-
[579] cumcision, marriage, and dozens of items of life are shrouded with ritual
and traditional prescriptions. My informant, Mahmoud, told me that
after a sermon given by a preacher coming from the city, who told the
[764] villagers that their customs practised on the death of a person were non-
Islamic, they took a vow not to practise them any more. Yet the adherence
to the oath was made for some six months, after which people gradually
relapsed to their traditional ways, with the only exception that women
were allowed to follow the deceased as far as the southern end of the village
instead of going on to the cemetery as had been the practice hitherto.

753 The extent of social change on the folkhood of the village could be also
examined in the villagers' ideas about sickness and disease which are
mixed with ritual and religious beliefs. Disease, it is supposed, can be
caused either by failure to fulfil some religious ritual or ceremony, such as
a financially able man not performing his pilgrimage, or the failure to give
the promised offerings to a saint, or providing a naming ceremony for a
[756] new-born baby. If saints are suspected as the cause of the disease, usually
a woman known to be the guardian of that particular saint, or upon whom
saints descend, would be consulted to tell whether the family has broken
or forgotten a sacrificial custom. If no special saint has been offended,
[755] then bread could be specially baked and distributed as a 'karama' amongst
people after the Friday prayer, asking God to relieve the sick.

[754] Sickness can also be caused by the evil eye, and in such cases a learned
man is asked to recite verses from the Koran or write a charm (higab) to
[751] be worn by the sick person as a prophylactic safeguard as well as a means
of treatment. Certain diseases like paralysis are believed to be caused by
the evil red wind emanating from the touch of jinn; an epileptic is also a
● [776] person who is mounted and obsessed by jinn who usually haunt deserted
places, wells, and high spots in the mountains. Curiously enough, tubercu-
losis is believed to be caused by pretence and social conceit.

Moreover, a sickness is considered as God's test for the endurance and
patience of the faithful. As the faithful are always exposed to affliction,
their faith in God should never be shaken, and hence their endurance of

knife and an antimony stick. The child's eyes are treated with kohl as a 844 protection against 'running eyes'. [751]

The navel cord is cut to a repetitive refrain. In the case of a boy, relatives would be singing:

'Who supports his father
  except him who descends from his loins,
May your legs be fit for the stirrup, [533]
  and your mouth for an answer.'

For a girl they sing only one line:

'She will make her father enter into the shade! (i.e. into the cool)
  and she will visit him every day!'

The most dangerous period for the newly-born child and his mother is 846 'the first forty days'. This is the period of confinement for the mother as she is considered to be 'unclean' and cannot cook, wash or even say her prayers. She is called 'nafasia' (breathing woman) as if her breath were [783] not clean, and this is the reason for her seclusion, as well as segregation from the rest of the household. She should take care of herself; she is advised not to move too much or to go out in the dark. She is usually fed on chicken, chicken broth, clarified butter, molasses and other richly [862] prepared dishes. She again becomes the centre of attention with respect to food given to her.

On the other hand, the first forty days are regarded as 'the angelic period' for the child. He is guarded by angels against the 'evil spirits'. [776] ● Yet the mother must remain in close proximity to the child, never leaving him alone, because if for any reason the angels were to neglect their guardianship, the child would be besieged by the devils. If the mother has to leave the child for a short time, someone else must attend to him.

The next event in connection with the new baby is the official declara- 553 tion of his name on the seventh day from his birth or sometimes at the end of the fortnight. For this purpose, a special ceremony is held called 'sobou' (related to the week). According to the village tradition the ceremony has a religious sanction from one of the sayings of the Prophet. It is almost universal in the village with regard to the naming of the first son, but less common with the succeeding sons. The most important [780] feature in the content of the ceremony is the killing of a yearling ram (ikk), and thus causing the blood to flow, over which the baby is passed seven times. 'Blood flowing' is supposed to ward off the effects of the 'evil eye'. [755] It is also considered as a sacrifice for the child's life, saving the child's life by giving the life of an animal. The traditional support for this is the story [782] of the Prophet Abraham whose son Ishmael was saved by a heaven-sent ram.[1] Such a ritual is always recommended on the occasion of due to the fact that there is no formal ceremony for the naming in Artas, as in Silwa, and hence the change is easier. 553

---

[1] Ishmael according to the Koran, Isaac according to the Old Testament.

Since the enforcement of registration of births about forty years ago, the child is registered after the ceremony. It is to be remembered that still-births are not registered, and are never buried in the cemetery, but always below the threshold of the house. 656 845

The mother takes no active part in all the ceremony activities, as she is not allowed to move from her room of confinement until forty days have elapsed. As mentioned earlier, the child is considered to be guarded throughout this period by the angels, who talk to him, entertain him, and sometimes tease or even annoy him. This is the explanation of the baby's occasional smiles, as well as cries. He smiles because the angels have told him that his father is alive, and cries when they inform him that his father has died. 846 [776] [827]

By the end of the forty days, the mother finishes her period of confinement and is considered to be in full control of the baby. She can move about with him and resume her ordinary domestic tasks as she becomes ceremonially clean after having her first bath, a kind of ritual cleansing. [783]

The end of this confinement means the gradual introduction of the child to the wider family circles by taking it on visits to relatives or them visiting the house with presents. If the mother takes the child to any house, the child is never expected to leave empty-handed. Whether near or distant relatives, or of no blood connection at all, they always give the child presents varying from salt, dates, a loaf of bread, an egg, to money and more valuable things. On the birth of the first child the paternal grandfather cannot see his grandson without sending a ram or a goat before his arrival. 846 851 431

Another step is the introduction of the newly-born boy to the other boys in the neighbourhood. For this purpose the mother prepares a dish of boiled maize or wheat and sugar, called 'balila', and taking her child, accompanied by the children of the neighbourhood, repairs to some elevated land to eat the food. For this occasion the mother dresses in new scented clothes. For the first time also, the child wears new clothes, consisting of a white undergarment covered by a striped one, thus discarding his mother's or father's old wrappings. 851 846

It is socially encouraged that both a woman and a man should give rein to their intense desire for children. The main function of marriage is to have children and thus perpetuate family life. This shows itself in one of the condolatory phrases addressed to any offspring on the occasion of their father's death: 'He who has left successors is not dead.' My informant, Ali, said, 'A childless couple will have no "successors" to read the "Fatiha" for their souls after their death and their name will thus end by their departure from this world. Children are really useful, not only in this world but in the world hereafter. The Prophet (on whom be the peace and blessings of God) said, "Get married and multiply, as I shall take 858 841 [183] [581]

852 occasion, even if they live with the father in the same household. Dispute 867 between brothers or sisters is usually an irrelevant factor in the exchange of mutual contributions which are morally compulsory on such occasions. [593] The ideal of the family solidarity must be expressed, at least formally at public ceremonies. The sociological significance of the ceremony cannot be exaggerated, as it must take place even in the case of children whose [826] foreskin is congenitally contracted or damaged by disease. Although such [776] children are believed to be circumcised by the angels, the ceremony is still held, even without any operation on the child.

Traditionally, one of the main justifications for holding the ceremony is 852 the religious significance attached to it throughout the whole Moslem 779 world. To be a Moslem, it is believed, is to be circumcised as distinguished from the non-Moslems, who for the most part are not circumcised. However, there is no text in the Koran that enjoins circumcision upon the Moslem, and it is only mentioned in the prophetic tradition. It is maintained that circumcision was the practice not only of the Prophet Mohammed, but all previous prophets, such as Abraham, Noah, Hud, Saleh, Joseph, Moses, and Solomon. In the prophetic sayings there is no fixed time for the performance of circumcision, as amongst the Jews; it is, however, preferable to have it done before the boy attains maturity. It is reported that the Prophet said, 'Abraham, the friend of the Merciful, was the first man who entertained guests, the first man who underwent circumcision, the first man who shortened his moustache, and the first man who saw grey hairs. He asked, on seeing the grey hairs: "O Lord, what is this?" The Almighty and Glorious Lord said: "Dignity, O Abraham." He said: "O Lord, increase dignity in me."' Another prophetic tradition says, 'Circumcision is my way for men, but is merely ennobling for women'. It is also reported that the Prophet told a woman who was just converted into Islam and was thinking of being circumcised, 'Don't inflict trouble on yourself, because that is painful to a wife, but pleasing to a husband'.[1]

852 The chain of authorities for most of the Prophet's dicta about circumcision is more often than not weak, and one is justified in regarding them [779] as open to question. The four Schools of Moslem Law differ as to the obligatory nature of circumcision.[2] The practice, however, was widespread, though not universal, in pagan Arabia, and to be uncircumcised —'aghral' or 'aghlaf'—was thought disgraceful. Modern educated Moslems might justify circumcision on hygienic grounds, but the writer did [183] not get any such explicit or implicit explanation from the villagers. For the latter, it literally means religious purification, which makes the person

---

[1] *Mishkat-al-Masabih*, English translation by al-Hag Maulana-Fazlul Karim, Vol. I, pp. 737–8.

[2] *Encyclopadia of Religion and Ethics*, Article, 'Circumcision (Muhammadan)', by D. S. Margoliouth. In the same source under 'Circumcision (Ancient Egypt)', it is mentioned that this ritual was practised in Ancient Egypt, although there is no decisive evidence with regard to either its generality or the nature of its practice.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954

MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

as 'you are the son of people who are like princes', and this type of praise 867
is more common than that related to the good qualities of the child himself. In this way, the identification with, and submergence into, the family is impressed upon the child. It is not surprising that on asking many young children about their names, their immediate answer was 'I am the son of so-and-so'. If the identity of the children is enquired about by the villagers, the question is normally formulated as 'Whose son are you?' It is noticeable that identification there goes with a sense of pride in one's family [857] which causes wrangling and quarrelling amongst children as well as adults. [578] The following conversation is typical of children's altercations in this connection. One child said: 'My father is better than yours; he never worked for someone else, and his turban has always been white. My people (our in Arabic) are all leaders (Arab sheikhs)'. The other boy retorted: 'All your people are liars and deceivers. We offer a larger tray of food for guests and on funeral occasions than yours. Your cow is "rotting" and its bones are sticking out from starvation. What is the use of just talking?'[1]

At an early age the child acquires the sense of property and becomes 867 interested in possessions. Many uncles, or grandparents, for example, give presents to the children. 422 Such a practice also forms the basis of one of the cardinal interests of children in animals. On my entering a house, a child insisted on showing me his goat, which his grandfather had sent him as a gift on the occasion of his circumcision. Sometimes parents may allocate a young calf or sheep to a boy, and in the case of a girl, a mother might keep a certain chicken or duck.[2] This is regarded as the child's own property, 'ala zimmatuh' or 'ala bakhtu', to be kept 'for his sake and luck', and consequently, at least theoretically, the parents do not dispose of the animal except for his or her benefit, e.g. to clothe him or her, or to buy things for him or her, or in the case of killing the animal or the chicken, the child would get the lion's share of the meat. In practice, however, under the pressure of hardship, the parents would more often sell the animal or give it away for their own account.

It is not difficult to see that the main objective of child training is to 861 cultivate a docile and yielding disposition in the child as the main characteristic of a 'muaddab'. For the attainment of such a goal, the motive of fear is very much worked upon in the training of children by their elders during the period of childhood. Parents usually resort to making the child conform to their wishes by frightening it with an imaginary creature called 'silowa'. There is hardly any young child who does not fear this chimera [776] which is supposed to eat children, especially at night. It is held by children that 'silowa' is a huge, ferocious animal that eats its young after suckling

---

[1] A. Tannous remarked that in the village community of Lebanon, swearing in mild cases usually refers to strictly personal characterists, whereas in intense conflicts, more violent terms, usually involving the family, are used. See his article 'Group Behaviour in the Village Community of Lebanon', in *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XLVIII, 1942, pp. 221–39.

[2] Such a chicken is usually marked by a thread tied round its leg or by cutting one of its claws.

861 them for some time. Boys and girls between the ages of four and seven are
often heard talking about the 'silowa' roaming through the village at night
776 on its way from the hills to its nightly drink from the Nile. The 'ghool' is
another imaginary beast, with a huge and hairy body, to whose attacks
the children are exposed during their sleep. Other ferocious animals, such
as dogs and wolves, are also invoked by mothers to induce the child to
come home early or to accept food.[1]

857 Some of the children's games concern themselves with the establishment
of a hierarchy in the order of fears. A child would move his fingers in front
of another child's eyes, challenging him, by asking: 'Whom do you fear
more, your father or God?' If the child blinks, then that indicates that he
fears his father more than God. This is sometimes asked of a younger
child without attempting to make him blink, merely to test his knowledge.
The same puzzle is also posed in a slightly different manner. An older
boy would ask a younger boy the question: 'There is a very small boy in
the market whom nobody can see, do you fear him or me more?' The proper
answer is expected to be 'him' as the invisible small boy in the market is
supposed to signify God. In this type of guessing game, it is obvious that
869 the children learn that fear is the symptom of recognizing the dominance
of the supernatural authority of God over that of the worldly authority of the
father. Moreover, children test each other through the expression of fear as
to whose authority they first submit, the paternal or the maternal uncle.

The fear of sacred objects is also inculcated during the period of childhood. The child is made to believe in their blessings as well as their dangers. He is taken to a saint's tomb or wears a Koranic charm when he is ill. At the same time he is warned against urinating near a saint's tomb or running about in the cemetery for fear of incurring the saint's wrath. The same double attitude is inculcated in him with regard to bread, milk, treading on written paper, passing over ashes from the burning of a charm made by someone else, or stepping over someone's legs. Durkheim has pointed out that the sacred objects are invariably thought of as possessing the power of sanctity and danger simultaneously. Psycho-analysts have traced this cultural phenomenon to the emergence into the field of consciousness of the dual role of the mother, and the ambivalent attitude connected with it. This probably mirrors the process whereby 'good objects' such as the mother or her milk turn into 'bad objects' such as the denying and frustrating mother and faeces.[2]

---

[171] [1] E. S. Stevens writes: 'The Silowa occupies much the same role in Iraki legend as the witch or ogress in Western fairy tales. She is a water spirit, for she dwells in the river or in caves near running streams. Her body is covered with long hair, her breasts are pendent, reaching her knees, and when she wishes to suckle her children, whom she carries on her back, she throws her breasts over her shoulder. . . . She is fond of human flesh . . . she has a partiality for human lovers.' *Folk Tales of Irak*, p. xvi, O.U.P., 1931. The classical word for 'Silowa' is 'Silah', pl. 'Saali'.

[2] George Devereux, 'Magic Substances and Narcotics of the Mohave Indians', in *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, Vol. XXII, 1949, p. 115.

159 Girls' dreams reveal the images of being in danger of drowning in the canal, black jinns with frightening eyes following them, men beating them, and so on.[1]

●776 Children also show fear of certain places believed to be inhabited by evil spirits, for example, deserted or ruined houses, deserted wells, spots where a murder was committed, some certain areas round the cemetery, a spot where a train ran down a person or an animal. It is believed by children and many adults that the person who meets a violent end will [775] reappear as a violent ghost—'sul' or 'marid'—haunting people at night and causing them harm by frightening them with its fiery eyes. A boy of twelve told me of this horrified feeling, when on an errand at night the 'sul' followed him, throwing stones at him, but it disappeared suddenly when the boy passed by a gathering of people on his way, as the 'sul' only appears to a person walking alone at night. Children are also warned against talking to or looking at their shadows, especially on moonlit nights, [822] as this might lead them to insanity. The girls are warned against looking [828] too much at their shadows at night or at their reflection in the mirror for fear of the same malady. To avoid evil spirits, however, children are told to recite the 'Fatiha' or any part of the Koran on passing near the haunted places. Charms are also held to protect children from such dangers.

154 In discussing these sources and manifestations of fear, especially those connected with the supernatural world, one cannot ignore the psychoanalytical interpretation which considers spirits and demons as projections of repressed aggressive tendencies against beloved persons. The writer is inclined to explain children's fears and their genuine belief in the existence of ogresses and bogies in the village as a projection of repressed hostile attitudes towards their parents or other members of the family.[2]

571 In this connection, one is tempted to ask the question: to what extent does the incentive of fear as a motive, so much emphasized in the village, affect the undercurrent trends of the social relationship between the villagers? The tension and suspicion discerned in the interpersonal relationships epitomized in the saying that 'every man has an enemy' could be related to the excess in resorting to both fear and rivalry motives in 773 the bringing up of children. The favourite legendary figure of 'Jiha' is liked by both children and adults, because of his trickery and cunning that always enables him to take revenge.[3] It could also be suggested that 154 this anxiety and fear through which children are stimulated is partially responsible for the adult defense mechanism of rigidity and caution.

---

[1] See Appendix XI.

[2] S. Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, pp. 87, 140.

For a reference to the striking feelings of ambivalence of children towards their parents in primitive society, see M. Fortes, 'Parenthood in Primitive Society', where he says that as the parents in primitive societies are responsible for the passing on of cultural traditions, relations of children towards their parents tend to be ambivalent. There is commonly a feeling of hostility underlying the affection and gratitude of children felt towards their parents. *Man*, May 1952, p. 65.

[3] See Chapter VIII.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

CHAPTER I

EGYPTIAN VILLAGES AND THEIR INHABITANTS

THE natural barriers of Egypt (Fig. 1) have enabled the in- 133
habitants, particularly those of the upper country, to live in [177]
comparative isolation throughout the whole of their history.
On the north side lies the sea, along the east and west sides stretch
vast, almost waterless deserts, while to the south ingress by way of
the Nile is impeded by a series of cataracts. Their geographical
isolation has doubtless been responsible for the characteristic con- 183
servatism of the Egyptian peasants. This conservatism is particu- 177
larly apparent in their religious and social customs and their
commoner industries, which, as will be more especially seen in the
final chapter, have remained almost, if not entirely, unchanged
from Pharaonic times.

The vast solitudes of the deserts are terrifying to the country 152
folk, most of whom, up to the present day, cannot be induced to 823
traverse even the lower fringes of those wastes after sunset (see
Fig. 2). Fear of hyenas, and, still more, fear of *'afārīt*,[1] forbids [825]
any man to venture beyond the cultivation at night. The ordinary [776]
peasant, unless he is obliged to remain in the fields either to protect
his crops or to watch over his sheep and goats, returns to his village 512
before sunset, remaining there until just before the dawn of the
following day.

The deserts have proved themselves valuable defences against 175
invasion, the peoples who conquered the country at different periods 177
of its history having usually entered it from the north-east. These 144
invaders do not seem to have left any very marked impression on
the physical aspect of the Upper Egyptians at any rate ; most of
these still bear a striking facial resemblance to the ancient in-
habitants of the land whom we see depicted on the walls of the [531]
temples and tomb-chapels and in the portrait-statues of the Old,

---

[1] See Chapter XIV.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927

MR13 Fellahin MR13

Upper Egypt

THE VILLAGES AND THEIR INHABITANTS

The influence of the deserts may be seen in Egyptian folk-tales, 776 133 538
many of which tell of encounters there with *afārīt* and other supernatural beings. Secret caves in "the mountain," as the people call the steep, sometimes almost precipitous ascent to the high-desert plateau, also enter into the adventures recounted by the village story-tellers; these 'caves' are, of course, the ancient rock-hewn tomb-chapels with which the outer face of "the mountain" is in some places honeycombed (see Fig. 3). [172]

Egypt is a land of contrasts, the marked difference between the very fertile Nile Valley and the arid, waterless deserts on either side of it striking the eye of every visitor to the country. 133 181 These physical features are, I think, reflected in the character of the peasants, for it is a remarkable fact that the most divergent traits of character can be seen in a single individual. The Egyptian peasants, in spite of much poverty and sickness, and with few amusements to break the monotony of their lives, are as a whole a wonderfully cheerful and contented people. [511] They are very quick of comprehension, of ready wit, dearly loving a joke, even if directed against themselves, usually blessed with a retentive memory, light-hearted, kindly, and very hospitable; they are also very hard-working. At the same time they are very emotional, highly strung, most inflammable, generally very ignorant, and nearly always conspicuously lacking in self-control. [152]

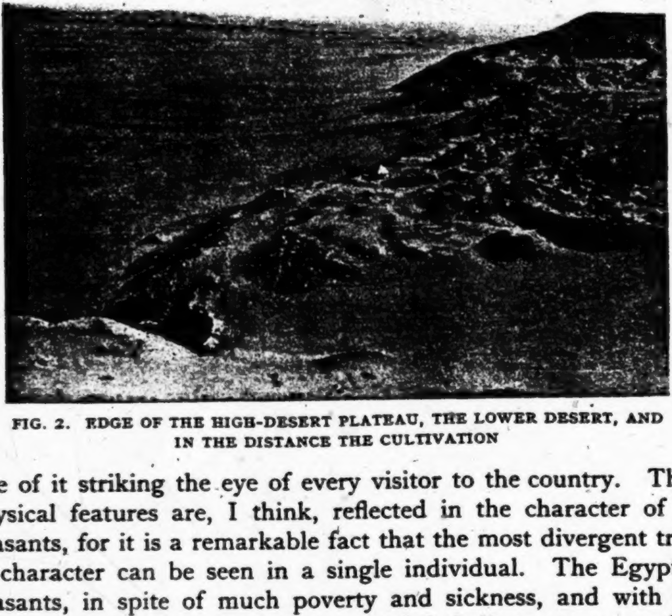


FIG. 2. EDGE OF THE HIGH-DESERT PLATEAU, THE LOWER DESERT, AND IN THE DISTANCE THE CULTIVATION

of which she would be the mistress. I have, however, no territory available for this purpose except the submerged land of el-Hun. It is in many respects favourably situated. It is a convenient distance from my capital. It is surrounded by desert. My daughter will thus be independent, and protected.' 773

" ' Quite true, great King,' responded Joseph, ' when would you wish it done ? For accomplished it shall be by the aid of Allah, the all-powerful.' [776] ●

" ' The sooner the better,' said the King.

" Then Allah inspired Joseph with a plan. He directed him to make three canals ; one from Upper Egypt, a canal on the east, and a canal on the west. Joseph collected workmen and dug the canal of Menhi from Eshmunēn to el-Lahūn. Then he excavated the canal of el-Fayūm and the eastern canal, with another canal near it called Beni-Hamed to the west. In this way the water was drained from el-Hun ; then he set an army of labourers at work. They cut down the tamarisks and bushes which grew there and carried them away. At the season when the Nile begins to rise the marsh had been converted into good cultivable land. The Nile rose ; the water entered the mouth of the Menhi Canal and flowed down the Nile Valley to el-Lahūn ; thence it turned towards el-Fayūm and entered that canal in such volume that it filled it, and converted the land into a region irrigated by the Nile. [787]

" King Raiyan thereupon came to see his new province with the courtiers who had advised him to set Joseph this task. When they saw the result they greatly marvelled at the skill and inventive genius of Joseph, and exclaimed : ' We do not know which most to admire, the draining of the marsh and the destruction of the noxious plants, or the conversion of its surface into fertile and well-watered fields.'

" Then the King said to Joseph : ' How long did it take you to bring this district into the excellent state in which I find it ? '

" ' Seventy days,' responded Joseph.

" Then Pharaoh turned to his courtiers and said : ' Apparently one could not have done it in a thousand days.'

" Thus the name was changed from el-Hun, or ' the Marsh,' to el-Fayūm, ' the land of a thousand days.' "

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927

MR13 Fellahin MR13

Upper Egypt

COPTS MR10

F 304 789 If a woman has lost several children in succession, when another one arrives she has it tattooed with a small dot in the centre of its forehead and another on the outer side of the left ankle. F [776] ● She believes that after this the child will live, because her *ḳarīneh*, seeing these marks, will not attempt to take her child.[1] The belief is that when King David had the interview with the queen of the *aḳrān* described in the following chapter she promised that any child that had these tattoo marks on the forehead and ankle should not be injured by its mother's *ḳarīneh*.

F 304 755 753 776 One man, who was a village guard far south in Upper Egypt, had a fish tattooed on the inner side of one arm, near the wrist. He told me that it was done some years before, when he was possessed by an *ʿafrīt*, that it quite cured him, and that he had never been troubled in that way since. This fish mark does not always serve a curative purpose, for in a village much farther north I saw F [531] a boy with a similar design tattooed on the back of one of his hands, and he assured me that it was done only as an ornament.

F C 304 787 Most of the Copts have a cross tattooed on the inner sides of the wrists There is a belief among some, if not all, of those Copts belonging to the *fellāḥīn* class that the Abyssinians will one day conquer Egypt, and will kill all the Copts as well as the Muslims if they (the Copts) cannot show this sign on their wrists. The Copts will, it is said, hold up their hands, thus exposing to view the sign of their religion.

F C 304 531 788 One Coptic friend of mine, a man of good position, showed me some tattoo marks on his arm. There was an elaborate pattern on the inner side of his arm, below which were tattooed the dates of the two occasions on which he had gone on pilgrimages to Jerusalem—1911 and 1914. Another Copt told me that his little sister also had the year of her visit to Jerusalem tattooed on one arm, and that in future the year of each succeeding pilgrimage that she made to the sacred city would be similarly recorded. His mother, who had performed the pilgrimage on several occasions, had had each year of this event tattooed on one of her arms. Tattooing can thus be a means of record-keeping.

F 304 463 The operation of tattooing is an exceedingly painful one, and has very often unpleasant results, though the discomfort may be only temporary. One of my servants, a young man of about twenty-two years of age, was very anxious to have the back of his right hand tattooed this year. A specialist in the art was usually

---

[1] See pp. 69 ff. for explanation of *ḳarīneh*.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

845 If a woman has lost several children in succession at birth she
776 thinks that somehow or other she has incurred the anger of her
774 *ukht* or *ḳarîneh*, or both, and that they have taken the children away from her. She therefore consults a female magician, who
791 gets into communication with these subterranean beings, and the
787 mother inquires what she has done to make either or both of them
776 angry. If the reply is that she has angered one or both of them
774 she must then bring bread made of wheat flour, of which both she
845 and the magician must partake. When the latter eats the bread it is as though the *ukht* and *ḳarîneh* ate it, for they eat it through her. After this ceremonial eating of the bread these beings make peace with the mother and tell her that the next time she gives birth to a child, and on all subsequent occasions, she is to act in the following way. She must bury the placenta, together with a round, bun-shaped loaf of bread, made of wheat flour, called *khubz*, and a *raṭl* (rather more than 1 lb.) of salt, in a bowl (Fig. 30), covered by another bowl of the same shape, under the floor of her house. By this means the *ukht* and *ḳarîneh* are appeased and will not take the woman's children from her.

[415]

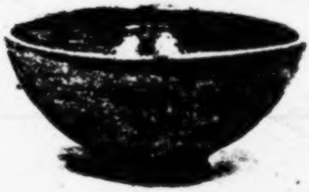


FIG. 30. JAR IN WHICH THE PLACENTA, TOGETHER WITH BREAD AND SALT, IS BURIED UNDER THE FLOOR

844 If a woman's new-born children have survived birth the midwife, or a female relative or friend, throws the afterbirth into the Nile or into a canal. As she does this, however, she must laugh or smile, for then the child will always be happy and cheerful. If, on the other hand, she neglects her duty in this respect the child will always have an unhappy disposition.

789 Some mothers, in order to ensure long life to their children, will take a small piece of the umbilical cord and wrap it in a cotton wick. This they put in a pottery saucer-lamp filled with oil, light it, place it in a little boat, and leave it to float down the stream. Others again—and this is a very common practice—will take a short length of the cord and sew it up in a strip of cotton material, which is then hung by a string from the child's neck. After a short time this, together with certain other charms to be mentioned presently, is sewn up in one of the small leather charm-cases, and must be worn throughout life. It is usual to hang

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

843 stained cloth. When the puppy is killed its head is cut off and
789 is pickled in salt, and it is worn by the expectant mother till
825 after the birth of the child, when it is transferred from her to the
infant. My informant, a clever, well-educated Egyptian lady, told
me that this is done because dogs are regarded as very unclean
animals in Egypt, and that therefore the mother's *ḳarîneh* would
[774 not come near her unborn child so long as she was wearing the
● 776] puppy's head; and for the same reason the child will not be
attacked or injured by its mother's *ḳarîneh* while it wears this
charm.

789 Another protective charm, worn by an expectant mother if all
843 her children have died before they have attained the age of seven
761 years, consists of the head of a hoopoo, a *ḍufr*[1] of a snake, a small
[825] piece of the under lip and of the ear of a dead donkey, a *nâb*
(double tooth) of a camel, a *ḥirbâyeh* (chameleon), and a written
charm. All these are hung under her right arm while she is
pregnant. After her confinement the child wears these charms.

I saw a set of these charms which had been worn by a woman during the last two months of her pregnancy, only in addition to the above-mentioned articles there were seven threads of silk, which may be of any colour. While the expectant mother was wearing these charms they were divided into two packets, each done up in cotton material. When I saw them they had been transferred to her child, and had all been put together into a raw hide case. The child must wear this until death, and it is supposed to ensure it a long life.

It is the custom in many parts of Egypt for a mother to wear an iron anklet if she has lost all, or most of, her children; or one of her surviving children may wear the iron anklet, which, it is believed, will protect the next child that is born. The photograph (Fig. 31) shows two such anklets which I obtained from villages in Middle and Upper Egypt.

845 If a woman has arrived at the time for her delivery, and she
suffers much, but cannot give birth, she may sometimes crawl under
[825] the body of a camel seven times backward and forward, after which
performance the child is born. The woman crawls from side to
side of the camel, so I was told, not between its hind-legs.

If a birth is delayed for three days, and the woman is in constant pain, her husband must wash his right heel and she must drink

---

[1] The word means 'nail' or 'claw,' but here, perhaps, a 'horn' of a cerastes.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

F
843 minutes after the death of the person to whom it belongs. Another
821 explanation of falling stars is that they are darts aimed by God
761 at unbelievers. Lane says[1] that they are believed to be darts
F
779 thrown by God at evil *ginn*, usually called *'afārīt*.

F
Certain precautions must be taken by a woman after she has
846 given birth to a child. A woman who has lately lost her baby must
not enter the room where a woman is being confined, nor for seven
F
days after this event. If this taboo is broken the woman who was
853 last confined will have no milk for her baby.

F
761 If a cat gives birth to kittens which all die, and a woman gives
895 birth to a child in the same house in which the cat had its kittens,
853 the cat must be taken away from the house or the baby may die.
825 Or, if it lives, the mother will have no milk.

F
Near a small village in Asyūṭ Province there is a stone, roughly
789 conical in shape, standing in the fields, and surrounded by whatever
853 crops are being cultivated on that spot. It is said that men
778 have often tried to dig it up, excavating to a considerable depth all round it, but no one has ever been able to come to the bottom of the stone. It is believed by the peasants to be very ancient. A certain mystery is attached to it because of these beliefs, thereby doubtless enhancing its magical value. Women who have not enough milk with which to nurse their children visit this stone on a Friday. They must not speak when coming to and going away from the spot, and they should step over it, still preserving absolute silence, seven times. After this, it is believed, they will have no difficulty in suckling their infant. I was told that the stone has been visited for this purpose, among others, for a hundred years or more.

F
846 If a woman or child brings meat to a house where there is a
762 woman who has a child under seven days old that person must
789 not go into the mother's room, but the latter must come out of
853 her room and step over the meat three times. If she does not do
this she will have no milk.

F
When a woman who is a Christian, whether Copt, Protestant,
846 or of any other denomination, has given birth to a child her
859 relatives take some wheat flour and mix it with water. Out of
776 this dough they make several crosses, sticking them on the walls
779 of the room occupied by the mother and child. The greatest
789

---

[1] *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1871), vol. i, p. 283.

F
C
846
854
776
774
789

number of crosses is placed in that part of the room where the child lies. It is believed that by this means no *ʿafārīt* can come near the child and that the mother's *ḳarīneh* cannot injure it.

F
776
779

Every human being is said to be born with a double, which is quite distinct from the *ʿafrīt*,[1] and it is called, in the case of a man, the *ḳarīn* (colleague, companion), in the case of a woman *ḳarīneh*. The man is always born with his male, as is the woman with her female, counterpart, according to the prevailing belief among most of the *fellāḥīn*. The *ginn*, or *ʿafārīt*, are often called " our brothers and sisters beneath the earth," but they are separate beings from the *aḳrān* (plural of *ḳarīn*), though the two communities are in touch with each other.

The *aḳrān* are believed to be of different colours, some being white, some black; their looks also vary, as some are beautiful and some are ugly. This belief is easily accounted for, as each person's *ḳarīn* is a facsimile of himself or herself, and doubtless the colours are racial distinctions. The *aḳrān* are not, I believe, always malevolent, though stories of their mischief-making propensities are commoner than accounts of their good deeds.

F
[753]

Not only do the *aḳrān* resemble their prototypes on earth in person, but also in character—in fact, they faithfully reflect in themselves all the actions, both good and bad, of their earthly duplicates. Thus, if a man or woman gets into a temper his or her double does the same; if he or she suffers pain and sickness, so does his *ḳarīn* or her *ḳarīneh*. This point was brought out clearly one day three years ago when a large number of women had come to see me and to have their eyes doctored. One of them was speaking about her *ḳarīneh*, so I said, " But your eyes are very bad now, what about those of your *ḳarīneh* ? "

" Oh," she replied, " her eyes also are bad."

" Poor thing," I said. " But who is looking after her eyes ? "

" Why, your *ḳarīneh, ginâb es-sitt* [honoured lady]," the woman immediately answered.

F
789
579
776
774

The following is another example of the intimate connexion between a human being and his or her double. When an argument begins between two or more men or women and a mischievous bystander wants to lead them into a real quarrel he will take two bricks and place them on their ends, each tilted against the other, or he will take off one of his shoes and place it on the

---

[1] See p. 237.

789 579 ● 776 774 ground upside down—*i.e.*, with the sole uppermost. This will make the disputants quarrel violently, and finally they will resort to blows. As soon as the bricks are taken apart or the shoe replaced on the foot of its owner the quarrelling will stop. My informant himself had witnessed an experiment of this kind. A friend of his, seeing two men arguing in the cultivation, placed one of his shoes, sole upward, on the ground. The disputants immediately started a violent quarrel, hitting out and striking each other. Then the friend replaced the shoe on his foot, and at once the quarrel ceased.

The belief is that when people start quarrelling their *aḳrân* come up above the ground and quarrel also. They are, of course, invisible, but they see the bricks or the shoe, as the case may be, and as long as the bricks remain together, or the shoe remains on the ground, they will continue to fight. As long as the *aḳrân* quarrel the people to whom they belong must quarrel too.

776 774 761 585 Again, a man's *ḳarîn* marries the *ḳarîneh* of his wife, and when a man or woman dies his *ḳarîn* or her *ḳarîneh* dies also. I had been informed of these facts several times, and the reality of the belief was brought home to me in the following way. An Egyptian friend of mine died some three and a half years ago, and I was sitting with his wife one day after his death when a woman 791 787 magician came to pay us a visit. I suggested a *séance*, whereupon the magician seated herself in a corner of the room and asked for a blanket, with which she completely covered herself. Presently she clapped her hands two or three times, thus summoning her familiar and some of the *ʿafârît*. They spoke to her, and after various messages from them had been conveyed to us through the magician my friend's wife asked her to inquire what had become of her husband's *ḳarîn*.

776 774 "Oh," was the reply, "he is dead also, and your *ḳarîneh* is a widow."

The magician was something of a ventriloquist, and her voice changed completely when the subterranean beings spoke through her.

776 779 152 As I have stated above, the *aḳrân*, besides being like their human prototypes in colouring and physical features, also resemble them in character. Most of the Egyptian peasants are of a very jealous disposition, and this quality is strongly marked among the women with regard to the possession of children. Childlessness is a real

Childlessness is a real terror to them, and the more children they have the happier they 842 are. They are often very jealous of the offspring of another, and 554 therefore precautions are taken to protect the children from the [754 ill effects of the evil eye, or eye of envy.[1] 152]

A woman's *ḳarîneh* may also be jealous of the human children, in spite of the fact that if a child is born to a woman the *ḳarîn* 776 ● or *ḳarîneh* of that child represents the offspring of the mother's 774 *ḳarîneh*. Various measures are taken to safeguard the human 843 child from the possible machinations of its mother's double. Indeed, the mother herself during her pregnancy must also be protected, for her *ḳarîneh*, in a fit of jealousy, may come at night while she sleeps and strike her "on the belly," thus causing premature birth. This is curious, as, presumably, the mother's *ḳarîneh* would also lose her child. But, at any rate in some parts of Egypt, the belief is that when a child dies it goes to the mother's [775] *ḳarîneh*, who would in this way possess at least one child, even if her own child (*i.e.*, the human child's double) died at the same time as its human prototype.

Sometimes the *ḳarîneh* speaks roughly to the expectant mother, but refrains from striking her. In such a case the woman will [791] go at daybreak to see a magician or a sheikh, and will ask him to write a protection for her. The protection (or written charm) is 789 the agreement of the queen of the *aḳrân* with King David. For 773 it happened one day that David saw one of them unfasten her 776 hair, and fire was issuing from her mouth.

So he asked her, "What is your work?"

She answered, "If a woman is pregnant I come by night and strike her on her belly, so that she will give birth to a dead child. And if I do not do this, but allow her to bear the child safely, I may perchance come and strike the baby, or cause a snake to bite or a scorpion to sting it, so that it will die."

Then David said to her, "If this is your work I will kill you," and he spoke threateningly to her.

So she made an agreement with him and said, "If a mother carries your words on her person I will never do her harm."

So David consented to this suggestion and let her go on her way. 843 Therefore if a pregnant woman thinks that she has cause to fear 789 that her *ḳarîneh* will do her an injury she will apply for a charm (*ḥigâb*) and wear it till her child is born, when she will give it to

---

[1] See Chapter XIII.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

843 the infant, hanging it round its neck till it is seven years old, after
789 which period it will be immune.

The *ḳarîneh* seen by King David was the queen of them all,
●776 and the promise she gave is binding on all her subjects. She herself is not, according to my informant, the double of any human being ; she is by herself, and, like the king of the *aḳrān*, lives for ever.

796 A woman's *ḳarîneh* may do good or evil to her children till they
774 have passed the age of seven years She does harm, so I was told,
753 only if the mother has been doing something wrong, or has been jealous of another. For instance, if the *ḳarîneh* clutches a child by the throat it means that the child's mother has been ill-tempered, and so on.

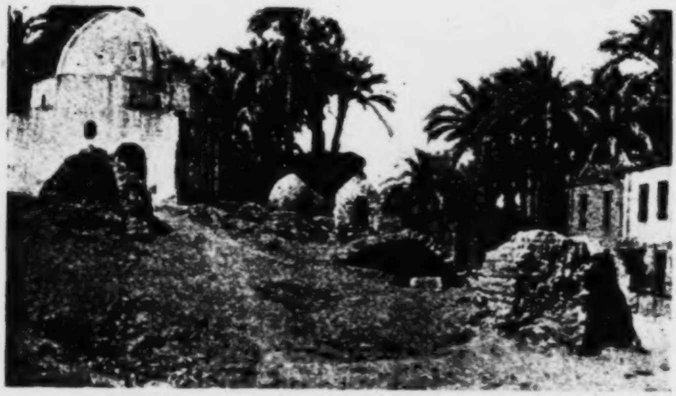
A man's *ḳarîn* does not affect his children ; it only affects him. If he should lose his temper with his wife or family, or with his friends, or does wrong in any way, and goes to bed unrepentant, he may wake up in the morning and find that some illness has attacked him. This has been caused by his *ḳarîn*. When he is
783 sorry and has expressed his repentance, or has called in a magician,
789 who will give him a charm to wear under his left arm, he will be cured.

753 If a child seems sickly and gets thinner and weaker every day
776 the mother knows that her *ḳarîneh* is trying to draw her child away
774 from her. Various methods are employed to mitigate this evil.
778 Near a small village in Asyūṭ Province there is a large stone which
755 is called the stone of the Sheikheh Fāṭimeh, who is believed to be buried here. If a child is being drawn away by its mother's *ḳarîneh* the mother will take it on a Friday to this stone, near which she will place the child, she herself staying to watch over it. If the child goes to sleep quietly the mother knows that it will recover, but if it cries and refuses to sleep she takes it home again, knowing full well that it will shortly die. I have myself seen a child lying near the stone fast asleep, with its mother sitting by.

In a village in Middle Egypt there is an old, disused graveyard, crowned by the domed tomb of a celebrated local sheikh. The other graves are now fallen into ruin, and many of them show large, gaping hollows (Fig. 32). A woman whose child is affected by her *ḳarîneh* will take it and place it in one of these cavities, the results being the same as in the case of the stone of the Sheikheh Fāṭimeh. This is a common custom in many parts of Egypt.

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

A child under eight years of age may suddenly begin to shake 753
all over, gasping, and catching at its throat, as if it could not 755
breathe. When this happens the grandmother, or, if there is no [603]
grandmother, a neighbour, is called in, and she takes the child, or, if there is more than one child under eight years of age, each one in turn, on to her lap and folds her *gallabīyeh* (native dress) over it. Then she takes a spindle and the implement (*maḥalleh*) [286]
on to which the wool is wound after it is spun, and winds the wool on to it; if there is no wool she will simulate the action of winding.



[764]
[778]
[341]

FIG. 32. RUINED GRAVES, IN THE APERTURES OF WHICH CHILDREN ARE PLACED WHEN AFFECTED BY THE MOTHER'S ḲARĪNEH

Then she will break both the spindle and the *maḥalleh*, and the child will recover.

A woman's *ḳarīneh* may sometimes perform a kindly action, for 776 ●
a certain woman who is related to a man whom I know always 779
declares that her *ḳarīneh* is very good to her. This woman has ten boys and two girls, and she is a widow and very poor. Her *ḳarīneh*, so she says, often comes to her when she is short of money and cannot do anything to help herself or her children. On one occasion when she was in this plight she heard her *ḳarīneh* call her by name three times while she was sleeping at night. Her *ḳarīneh* then took her by the hand and led her down the street in which she lived. When she got to the end of it the *ḳarīneh* put some money in her hand and left her. The woman then returned to her house.

THE FELLAḤIN OF UPPER EGYPT

776 Another example of kindness shown by a *ḳarîneh* to her human
779 prototype is described on p. 102 (see also p. 235).

789 The following is a translation of the written charm (Fig. 33)
843 worn by an expectant mother who has reason to fear harm being done to her offspring by her *ḳarîneh*. The charm is obviously Coptic, but it is used by Muslim mothers as well as by those professing Christianity. " In the Name of God of Triune nature, He is the Mighty Benefactor, Creator of all the powerful witches [evil women], Whom eye does not see and thought cannot conceive [mix with], Who knows what is before it is, before Whom the angels tremble with awe, and Whom the devils fear for His Power. All things in Heaven and on earth worship Him, and He is Ruler over all things. O God, by Thy Mighty Name and Powerful Arm and the Beneficent Light of Thy Face protect the bearer of this my charm—what is in her womb and who drinks [will drink] of her milk—from the devilish, cursed *ḳarîneh* by the power of this magic square and what of Thy Mighty Name it contains."

[539]

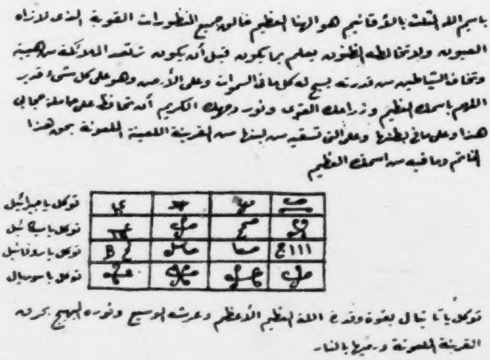


FIG. 33. CHARM AND CHARM SQUARE WORN BY AN EXPECTANT MOTHER

The probable meaning of the square in the illustration is, so I was told : " Make it your charge, O Gabrāîl, make it your charge, O Mikhāîl, make it your charge, O Rūfāîl, make it your charge, O Sūriyāl, make it your charge, O Māniyāl, by the power and might of the Mighty God, the Almighty, and His broad Throne, and His dazzling Light, to burn the cursed *ḳarîneh* and cast her into the fire."

776 There is another personality besides the *ḳarîn* or *ḳarîneh*, called
779 the *ukht* (sister), which is believed to be born simultaneously with each human being. There is, however, no *akhkh* (brother), but

the *ukht* only is attached to each individual, whether male or 776
female. According to my informants among the *fellāḥīn*, the 774
ukht of each person lives underground,[1] though it comes up on occasions. It resembles in character the human being to whom it is attached. Thus, if a man or woman is good his or her *ukht* is good, if bad the *ukht* is bad also. It is quite distinct an entity from the *ḳarīn* and *ḳarīneh*.[2]

The following incidents happened last year in connexion with 843
a woman and her husband, both of whom are well known to me. 776
The woman in question was expecting to become a mother, and 774
she and her husband were having a meal together one day when a cat came into the house and tried to eat some of their food. The woman hit the cat, which disappeared immediately. Being surprised at this sudden and miraculous disappearance of the animal, the woman consulted a well-known female magician who lives in her village. This magician got into touch with the "people beneath the earth," who informed her that the *ukht* of [787]
the woman mentioned above was angry with her, and wanted to know why she had hit her when she had come to her house in the form of a cat. The woman then said that she was very sorry, but she had not known that it was her *ukht* who had come in that form. The *ukht* said, "Why did you hit me? Did you not want me to eat?" She also complained that the woman to whom she was *ukht* had no *kūz* for her *zīr*, so that she (the *ukht*) could not drink when she came to the house. (A *kūz* is a large tin mug, and [915]
anyone who wants a drink dips it into the *zīr*—a large pottery [312]
jar, often kept in a special kind of cupboard, and containing the household water—and drinks from it.) The magician told the woman that she must buy a *kūz* and put it with the *zīr* in the cupboard, which was to be locked so that no one could get at it, and the *ukht* could drink without being disturbed.

It also transpired that the woman's *ukht* and also the *ukht* of her husband were both very jealous, because the man and his wife were always laughing together. The two *ikhwāt* (plural of *ukht*) said they did not like it, and that if this merriment between the pair [761]
continued all their children should die. The woman was to laugh only occasionally, and then all would be well. To my own know-

---

[1] See also pp. 69, 184, 186, 227.

[2] See my article on the subject, "The Ḳarīn and Ḳarīneh," in the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, vol. lvi, January–June, 1926, pp. 163–169.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

843 776 774 ledge this woman is of an exceedingly jealous disposition, which no doubt accounts for that particular trait being exhibited in her *ukht*! Her husband is a decent man, but I have had no opportunity of judging as to whether he is jealous or not. However, one must presume that he is so, in view of the fact that his *ukht* appears to possess this quality in so marked a degree!

As will be seen below on p. 186, some of the subterranean beings also have each an *ukht*.

846

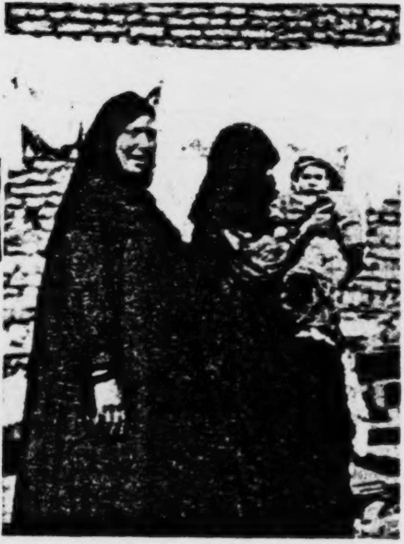


FIG. 34. CHILD WEARING FROCK AND HOOD OF SACKING

[854] [291] [192] A woman remains unclean for forty days after giving birth to a boy and for thirty days if the child is a girl. I have also been informed that the husband must not enter the room occupied by his wife for seven days after the birth, and that if he wishes to speak to her he must do so from a distance. I am not sure if this is always the rule, but it is so among some of the *fellāḥīn*.

854 A child is not washed at all until the seventh day after birth, and then the face, hands, and feet only are washed. When I endeavoured to make the women understand how unhealthy this was they declared that they were afraid to wash a child until it was seven days old, and then only to the limited extent just mentioned, for fear of its catching cold. [153] On one occasion a child was brought to me in a most filthy state, and covered from head to foot with suppurating sores. I told the mother that I would not give her any medicine until she had washed the child. 854 164 515 On hearing this she became terribly distressed, and declared that she could not wash it. I remained firm, however, in my refusal to give her anything until she had made the child cleaner. It transpired that the child's father had had spots on his body when he was younger,

854 for washing the child is obtained the night before and put into a 852 metal jug with a long spout called an *ibrīḳ*. This is stood in a metal basin, and both are placed near the mother and child. The [776] water is called *moiyet el-malāyikeh* (water of the angels), angels [774] meaning in this connexion the *ḳarīn* of the father, the *ḳarīneh* of the mother, and the *ḳarīn* (or *ḳarīneh*) of the child. The *ibrīḳ* is decorated in different ways according to the sex of the child. On the occasion of the birth of a boy I observed that a rosary (*sibḥeh*) belonging to the father was twisted round the *ibrīḳ*, while a handkerchief belonging to the boy's sister was tied round the top of the vessel. On another occasion, when a girl was born, the mother's gold necklace and some brightly coloured silk handkerchiefs were fastened round the *ibrīḳ* (see Fig. 36). This decoration is done, so I was told, to appease the *malāyikeh*, who [776] would then do no harm to the child or its mother. After the child has been washed a man of the same age as the father of the infant must drink the water that remains over in the *ibrīḳ* It is believed that this will ensure the child's growing up into manhood.

[291]

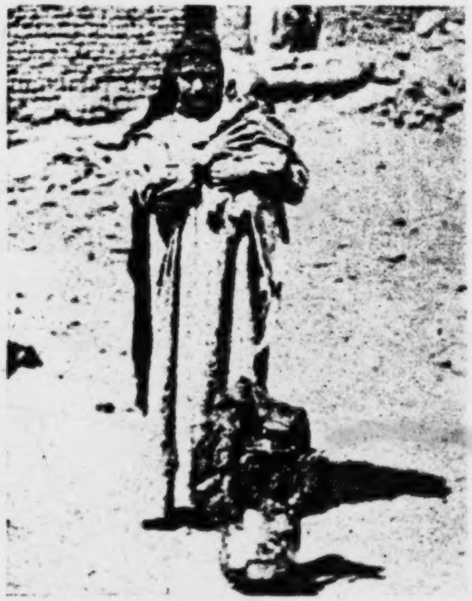


FIG. 36. YOUNG MOTHER AND CHILD WITH DECORATED IBRĪḲ

852 On the seventh night (*i.e.*, the evening preceding the seventh day) two or three large baskets, each containing salt, beans, seed of *ḥelbeh* (fenugreek), lentils, wheat, clover, and maize, are placed in the room occupied by the mother and child. Sometimes one of the baskets may be filled with bread, this being often in the form

842 Sometimes if a woman has no children her friends will take her to the railway and make her lie down between the lines in order 152 that the train may pass over her. One reason given me for this somewhat dangerous procedure is that the fear which the woman [827] experiences assists conception, for it is said to cause the blood to circulate quickly through the body, making the womb expand, with the result that she will more easily conceive. Another explanation given me for this rite was that when the mother is thus frightened her *ḳarīneh* comes to her with the soul of one of her dead children and causes it to re-enter its mother's body. The soul of a dead child, so I have been told, goes to its mother's *ḳarīneh*. Probably these explanations are accepted by some of the people, but in many cases, I fancy, such rites are merely carried out because they are customary and recognized cures for childlessness.

[291]
[142]

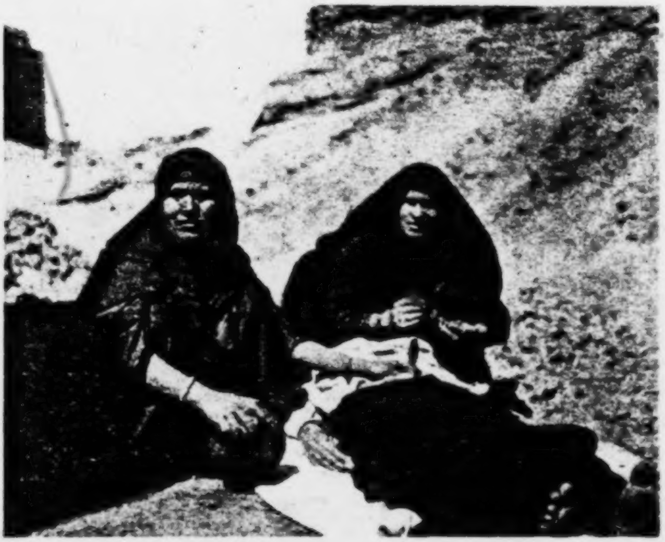


FIG. 45. FERTILITY RITE: LIGHTING THE 'CANDLE'

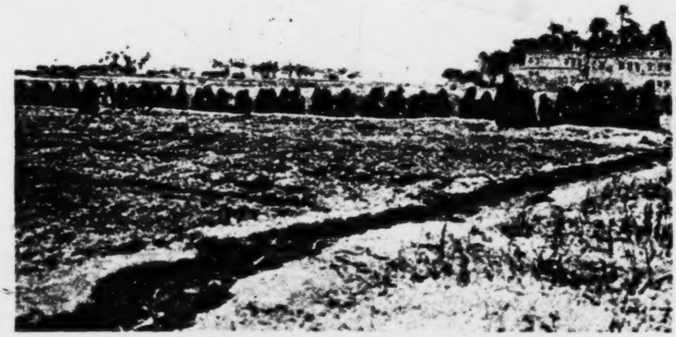
[776]
[774]

764
842
The water with which a corpse is washed before burial is, if possible, obtained from a mosque or from a sheikh's sacred well. *After the washing is completed a barren* woman will seize the opportunity to step over this water seven times. I was told of one who resorted to this device and who became pregnant a month afterward.

DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

The clothes which the man or woman wore when he or she died 764
must be washed, and then a *fiḳīh* comes and recites passages from 793
the Ḳorān, having the clothes close to him and one of his hands 775
resting on them. He also recites over the place where the person
died. If these precautions are not taken the *rōḥ* of the dead person
cannot leave the house. When a child dies a hen is killed instead [762]
of an animal, the rest of the procedure being the same as on the [825]
occasion of the death of an older person.

I have given this information as it was repeated to me, but I 764
776
775



[342]
[133]

FIG. 51. STRING OF WAILING WOMEN IN A FUNERAL PROCESSION

fancy that it is really the ʿ*afrīt* of the dead person that is meant in this statement, not the *rōḥ*, which is the soul, the ʿ*afrīt* being the ghost, and quite separate from the *rōḥ*, according to the popular belief.[1]

The corpse is borne to the grave by four male bearers, who are 764
constantly changed during the procession to the cemetery, for to 152
assist in thus carrying the dead is considered a pious act, and he [781]
who performs it thereby acquires considerable merit. The funeral procession is headed by men, those who are relations walking as near as possible to the bier. Immediately behind the bier walk the female mourners (Fig. 51), their faces, hands, and arms dyed blue, and their heads, breasts, and arms plastered with mud; they hold handkerchiefs, usually blue or black, and sometimes green, which they wave in the air as they give vent to their piercing

---

[1] See below, pp. 237 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

the bier from the ground, and the procession is continued to the 764
grave. As they proceed the men chant the profession of faith : 152
" There is no God but God, and Muḥammed is the Apostle of God. [788]
The blessing of God upon him and peace, a thousand blessings upon
Muḥammed." These words are repeated over and over again till
the graveside is reached.

It is believed that the dead, while being carried to the grave, can 764
make their bearers walk fast or slowly. If the bearers are made 775
to go quickly it is said to mean that the deceased is a good man or 787
woman, who wishes to go as fast as possible to the tomb, and does
not fear the visit of the two angels Nākir and Nekīr, who are [776]
believed to come to the tomb on the first night after burial to
examine the deceased as to the life he spent on earth and to question
him as to his religion.

When the bearers suddenly feel themselves being dragged back, or even unable to move at all, it is believed to be that the deceased does not like the spot chosen for the grave.

During a funeral procession in a village well known to me the bearers were not able to advance a step, owing to the dead man objecting to the locality of his grave ; however, as it had already been dug, and the bearers were not willing to pander to any such whim, they carried the bier round and round in a circle, thus making the dead man so giddy that he lost his power over his bearers and did not realize where they were conveying him ! They were thus able to rush him into his grave without more ado !

On another occasion, in the road running past my house, I saw the bearers being dragged back by constant jerks. The reason given was that the dead woman who was being carried to her grave was upset that her son, a very young boy, was not in the procession. Some one, therefore, had to fetch him, and then the *cortège* proceeded on its way without further interruption.

There appears to be a belief, at any rate among some of the 774
peasants, that a man's shadow is a separate entity. It walks with 775
him through life, dies with him at his death, and then enters with
him into his tomb. When discussing this point with some of the
people I gathered that no one knew what became of it afterward.
I was told that there is no belief, such as is found in some parts of
the world, that a man may be injured by some one stepping on his
shadow.

On returning to the house of the deceased the men seat them- 764

243
431
264
789

threshing-floor, either *faṭīr*, *kunāfeh*, or *rashteh*, or cooked meat. He stands up on one of the heaps of grain and calls out to his

[231]
[492]

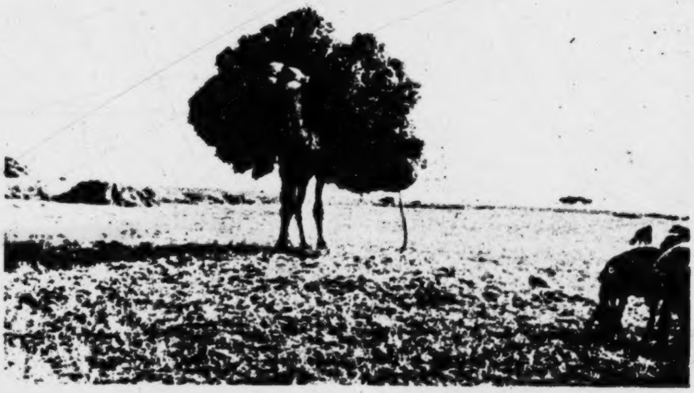


FIG. 102. CARRYING CORN TO THE THRESHING-FLOOR

friends, " Come and eat," and he fires off his gun as a sign of joy. When his friends have eaten he places some of the food that is over

[907]
[291]

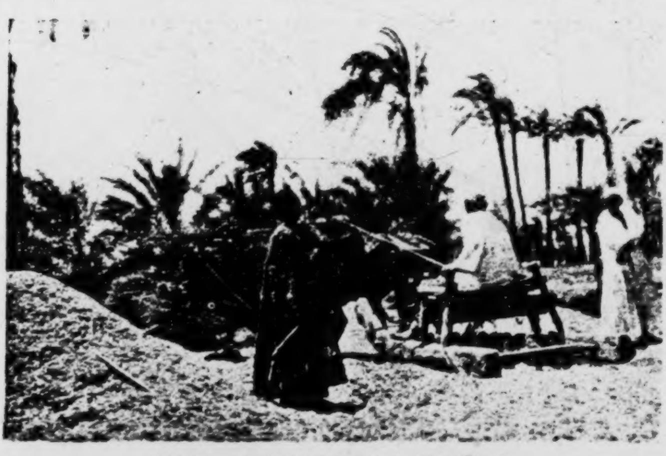


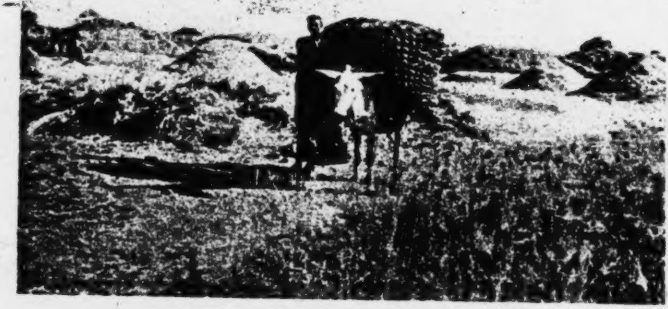
FIG. 103. THRESHING WITH THE NŌRAG

789
782
776

around and in the heaps of grain. This, it is believed, will bring a blessing and a plentiful supply of the grain; also, so the peasants

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

789
782
776



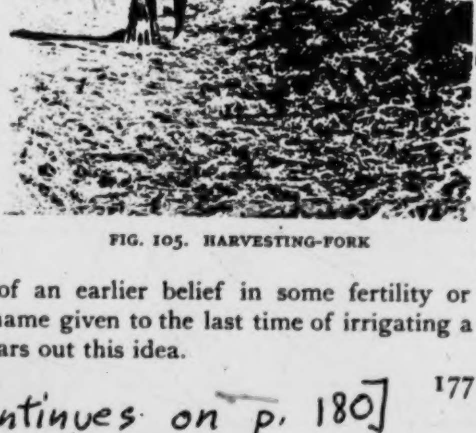
[492]
[231]
[243]

FIG. 104. CARRYING AWAY THE STRAW

believe, it will satisfy the *'afārīt*, who will eat some of the food thus placed for them. If the owner neglected to do this the *'afārīt* would take some of the grain.

This custom, as well as that mentioned before, of placing bread among the heaps of winnowed grain suggests a belief, at some period, in a corn-goddess, to whom offerings had to be made. So far as I have yet discovered there is no trace of such a belief left in the minds of the peasants, but these ceremonies certainly suggest the possibility of an earlier belief in some fertility or earth-goddess, and the name given to the last time of irrigating a field (i.e., *el-fiṭāmeh*) bears out this idea.

782
776
174



[412]
[291]
[243]

FIG. 105. HARVESTING-FORK

[Text continues on p. 180]

791 554 employed for evil no less than for beneficent purposes, the magician is greatly feared as well as respected by the villagers. In order to propitiate him they offer him presents of grain, prepared food, and [431] [754] other desirable commodities, for there is always lurking in the peasant's mind the fear that he may unintentionally arouse the displeasure of the magician, who might thus on his own account devise evil against him, or at any rate be more easily induced to do so by an enemy of the unwitting offender.

791
756
●776
787

[291]

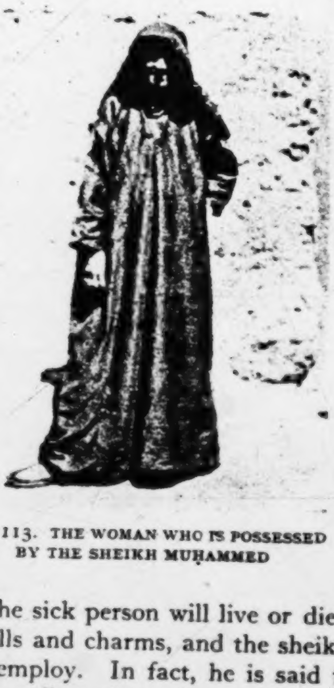


FIG. 113. THE WOMAN WHO IS POSSESSED BY THE SHEIKH MUḤAMMED

There is a female magician of my acquaintance who is possessed by a certain sheikh Muḥammed (Fig. 113). This sheikh has never lived on the earth, but is a member of one of the communities of supernatural beings who are supposed to live "beneath the earth." This sheikh is always with the woman—*i.e.*, clothed with her body. She calls to him to draw his attention when she is requested to exercise her powers. For instance, if a sick person, whether child or adult, is

791
755
787

brought to her she is supposed to be able, by the aid of the sheikh who possesses her, to say if the sick person will live or die. She is much sought after for spells and charms, and the sheikh advises her in each case which to employ. In fact, he is said to go beneath the earth to write the spell or charm in question, which he brings to her when it is completed, and which she passes on to the person who has come to her for treatment and advice. At such times this woman is *called the Sheikh Muḥammed*, and is supposed to assume his sex and character.

755
756
One of my village women friends who was suffering from a pain in her head went with me one day to consult this magician, and to ask to be given a cure. The house into which we entered was soon packed to overflowing, the very window being blocked with

sightseers. The floor and the walls of the room were of mud, but 755
a fairly clean mat was secured for me to sit on, the magician and 756
her patient squatting close by me. The former took the kerchief [352]
from off her patient's head, folded it cornerwise, and measured it
from corner to corner with the span of her hand. She then knotted
it and sat on it. Suddenly her whole body began to shake violently,
and she uttered curious noises. This indicated that the sheikh 755
was assisting her and making his presence felt. Her face now 756
underwent a remarkable change of expression, and her voice, attitude, 787
and whole behaviour became distinctly masculine, and everybody
present addressed her as the Sheikh Muḥammed. She told
her patient that she was to visit a certain sheikh's well, which was [778]
situated some miles away from her village. The sick woman asked
if she might not go to the well of a sheikh in the magician's own
village, but this request was peremptorily refused. It was, she
said, necessary that the well mentioned before should be visited.
This event happened during Ramaḍān, the month of the Muslim
fast, and the magician told the woman that she was to come to see [796]
her again on the day of the 'Little Festival' (which immediately
follows Ramaḍān) and that then she would give her a charm to
wear.

The magician kept up her manly impersonation even after the *séance* was over, and she presently declared, much to the joy and amusement of the villagers, that she had fallen in love with me and wished to marry me! This ridiculous speech was believed to come from the Sheikh Muḥammed who possessed her and whom she impersonated, at any rate for the time being. She would not be satisfied until I consented to be photographed with her!

Another female magician of my acquaintance (Fig. 114) is also 791
somewhat renowned within her village circle. This woman's husband 776●
is dead, and she lives with two of her sons. One room in their
house is set aside for her use only; no one else must ever enter it, [778]
except the people from beneath the earth, with whom she is supposed
to be in close and intimate relationship, and for whom there
is always a supply of food and a *ḳulleh* full of water in her room.
When she takes a meal she does so in this apartment, and she will [264]
not eat with other people. She has five familiars who live beneath
the earth, and through them she gets into touch with the other
subterranean supernatural beings, including *ʿafārīt*. One of these
familiars is called Zedimāl; another, a son of Zedimāl, is called

791 776 Mu'awwad ; another is a man called el-Akhras (the dumb one), while two others are women, one of whom bears the name of el-Ḥaggeh. The last-named is the most important of all, but she never comes up above ground, and Zedimāl is her servant.

791 515 787 776 This magician, I learned, must always be very clean both in her person and in her clothes. If she wears a single garment that is dirty the male familiar, el-Akhras, comes up from beneath the earth and possesses her. He seizes her so that she falls on to the ground, shaking all over, and is unable to eat or move. On such occasions her sons will sit down near her, begging her to tell them what is the matter. Then Zedimāl comes up (I was not told how she was brought up) and stops all the anger. The [291] magician must at once remove the dirty garment and put on clean clothes. There are only two colours, besides black, that she may wear—green and red. When I went to Egypt last autumn I took her a silk handkerchief. I chose a purple one, thinking that that colour would be a suitable one for a widow, but this had to be changed for one of the two colours permitted to her.

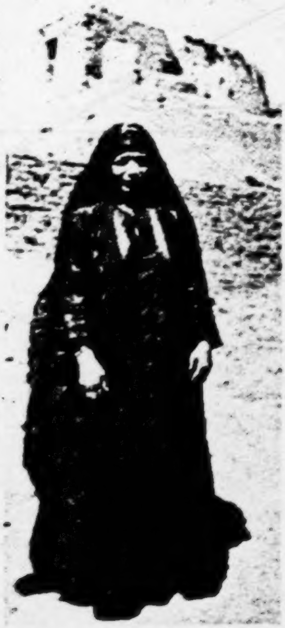


FIG. 114. THE FEMALE MAGICIAN WHO HAS FIVE FAMILIARS

791 782 776 A *ṣulḥeh*[1] is a sort of peace-making feast, and it is sometimes held by people who have appeased the sheikh or sheikheh by whom they may be possessed. When a man wants a *ṣulḥeh* this woman magician dresses in men's clothes and wears a silk scarf such as is worn by the men, and carries in her hand a stick with a silver knob. If it is a woman who requires the *ṣulḥeh* the magician wears her own clothes. This ceremony is described later (p. 199). When I last saw this magician there was trouble between el-Akhras, her male familiar, and his *ukht*,[2] for each person beneath the earth has an *ukht*. El-Akhras wanted to have a *ṣulḥeh*,

---

[1] *Ṣulḥ* = peace ; *ṣâlaḥ* = to make peace with.

[2] See pp. 74 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927

MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

F
791
782
776 ●

sharing it with his *ukht*, but the latter was angry and refused, saying that she was greater than he, and must have the sacrifice of a ram to herself, demanding also that her *ṣulḥeh* should come first. The magician could not then afford to buy two rams for the double sacrifice, so matters were delayed, and nothing could be done while I was in Egypt.

F
755
787
776

This female magician is called in to help and give charms and advice on all manner of occasions. If a woman is suffering from sheikh-possession she will consult the magician as to why the sheikh is thus troubling her. A woman whom I have known for some years was afflicted in this way, and the magician was called in to advise. I was present at the time and witnessed the whole ceremony. The magician, having heard the woman's account of her trouble, went into a corner of the room and was covered all over with a blanket. After muttering to herself for some time she suddenly clapped her hands and began a conversation with her familiar Zedimāl. Salutations were passed between Zedimāl and all those present in the room, including myself, and then the magician asked why the sheikh was troubling the woman. It was explained that the sheikh demanded a pair of gold earrings, which the woman he possessed was to wear, and also a new *gallabīyeh* (dress), yellow in colour, also to be worn by the woman. If these were obtained the sheikh would be appeased. The husband of this woman was a poor man, but the gold earrings and the new dress had to be bought, and would be paid for by degrees. Shortly after this I was in the village again and inquired how the woman was. I was informed that the earrings and dress had been purchased, but that she was still troubled, though not to the same extent. She had again inquired of the magician, and I believe the sheikh had demanded more, but I never heard all the details!

F
C
791
778

In a small village in Upper Egypt there are two magicians, one a Copt, the other a Muslim. They are both clever, and both are in great demand, their fame having spread far beyond their native province. They are friends of mine, and have told me a number of the devices and charms used by them on various occasions. An inscribed charm obtained from magicians is usually enclosed in a small leather case, and hung by a cord of plaited leather or a string round the neck or waist of the person for whom it has been prescribed (Fig. 115). The following information was obtained from the two men mentioned above.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13 ●
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

THE FELLAHIN OF UPPER EGYPT

E 791 787 789 When a magician is called in to find hidden treasure he goes at night to the ground where the treasure is said to be hidden, and he sweeps the whole plot to get rid of impurities, afterward sprinkling it with water. When this is done he lights a fire in which he burns some of the feathers of a hoopoo. The whole ceremony is repeated two or three nights in succession. On the third night the magician E ●[779] cuts a cross with a knife the whole length and breadth of the selected site. On the knife are inscribed the letters of the King of *alif*, these letters representing the servants of the King. (I should explain here that each letter of the alphabet, of which *alif* is the first, is said to have a king attached to it.) F C [832] The magician now brings branches from four different trees—*i.e.*, olive, pomegranate, apricot, and tamarisk (*ṭarfā*). These four branches are stuck into each outer point of the cross, and are brought together at the upper ends like a tent. Then he takes a branch from a young palm-tree that has not yet borne any fruit. The length of this palm-branch must measure from the magician's elbow to the tips of his fingers, plus the length of his hand. The upper ends of the four branches mentioned above having been tied together, the branch from the palm-tree is tied horizontally across them, its leaves being stripped off, leaving only the mid-rib. On either E [776] side of this mid-rib the magician writes the letters belonging to the two kings of fire, water, air, and dust—for each of these has two kings, one an *'afrīt*, the other a heavenly being. Then he will watch the branch to see in which direction it will bend. If it bends toward the right he will shift all the four branches which are stuck in the ground in that direction—*i.e.*, toward the right—and again watch the horizontal mid-rib. He will repeat this process until he gets to a spot where the mid-rib of the palm-branch remains absolutely horizontal and motionless, when he knows he has arrived at the exact spot under which the treasure lies concealed.

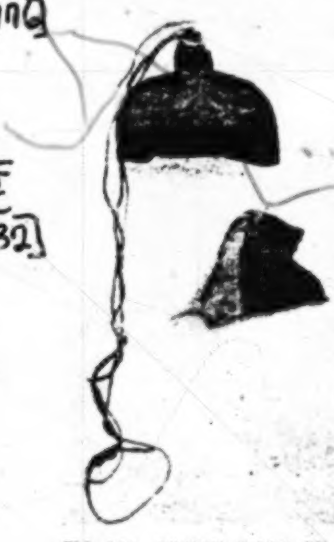


FIG. 115. CHARMS WORN BY A WOMAN TO KEEP HER HUSBAND'S LOVE

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13 ●
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

MAGICIANS AND MAGIC

E

The following is another method of finding hidden treasure. 791
In this case a priest acted as magician, and the exact spot where 787
the treasure lay hidden was known. 789

E

On the outskirts of a certain village in Upper Egypt there is a
very large stone. It lies on the ground and is covered with water 778
for a great part of the year—probably water left from the inundation. 776 ●
Under this stone treasure of great value is believed to be buried
The stone is said to extend some distance underground, its base being some yards below the surface. A cock is supposed to be the guardian of this treasure, and it sometimes appears to certain of the villagers, crows two or three times, and then disappears.

E

A Coptic priest in the neighbourhood owns a book in which is 793
entered a list of all the buried treasures in that province, where 773
such hidden hoards are believed to be numerous. Among others 773
in this book was noted the description and locality of the hidden 789
treasure in question, and he determined to see if he could get it. Accordingly, at midnight he went to the stone, taking his book with him, for in it were written the proper incantations to be recited on such an occasion. He also took incense with him, which he burned in a dish, meanwhile reciting the incantations prescribed in his book. Suddenly the great stone broke in two, the two halves banging together and making a sound like the roar of a lion. This terrific noise disturbed all the inhabitants of the village near by, who came out to see what was the matter. The priest was so afraid of being discovered that he climbed up a tall palm-tree not far from the spot and remained there till dawn, when he ventured to climb down and return to his house.

I was told that, as soon as the priest ceased burning the incense and reciting the incantations, both acts having come to an abrupt conclusion when he fled in terror to the tree, the two halves of the stone joined together again, and not the slightest trace of a crack is now visible.

E

The people say that it would be useless for anyone to attempt 773
to dig up the treasure, for the deeper you dig the lower the stone goes into the earth.

There is a large number of stories current all over the country about hidden treasure, and I have been told of the existence of more than one book containing a list of places where treasure is to be found.

It is the custom of many of the countryfolk to hide their money 000

THE FELLĀHĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

454 It is the custom of many of the countryfolk to hide their money underground, either in their houses or outside, and I know of more than one very rich man who refuses to put his money in a bank, but prefers to bury it. Such people, of course, though wealthy, [87] are entirely without education, beyond a knowledge of reading and writing. Perhaps they may confide the secret as to where the money is buried to a brother or wife, but sometimes they die without telling anyone where it is concealed. I have been told by one or two officials that such stores of money have been accidentally discovered from time to time, and these discoveries are quite enough to account for the large number of stories about hidden treasure which are current all over the country.

754 As I have already stated, and as I propose to show in the following paragraphs, the magicians' powers are sometimes employed for sinister purposes.

If a man wants to make his wife hate him so that he may easily divorce her he calls in the aid of a magician, who will proceed as follows. He takes an egg which was laid on a Wednesday, and on the shell of it he writes certain magic letters, which are supposed to form the name of the King of the Tombs. He then takes the egg and buries it in a tomb, but on no account must anyone know which tomb it is. For Christians it would be the tomb of a Christian, for Muslims that of a Muslim. By the time that the magician has returned from depositing the egg in its hiding-place the charm has already begun to work. The egg must always be left where he placed it. Should anyone discover its secret hiding-place and remove it the charm loses its effect, and the woman would again love her husband.

If a man wishes to procure the death of a man whom he regards as his enemy he will go to a magician, who acts in the following way. He takes a hen and kills it, keeping the blood in some vessel. He then obtains an egg laid by a hen that has black feathers only, and on it he writes this magic square (Fig. 116) with the blood of the hen he has killed. He burns some incense, holding the egg over
754 the fumes, with the inscribed side downward, repeating the follow-
788 ing incantation three times: "In the Name of God, the Com-
776 passionate, the Merciful. By the Name of God, the Mighty King and Majesty. Possessor of Possessions, the Throne and Seat, the Heavens and Earth. Blessèd be God, Lord of the World, Lord of all power and transcendent might. Light of Light and Spirit of Spirits. All Glorious, Holy Lord of Angels and the Spirit, praise

Him, the Highest. Take charge, Angel Gabrāīl, of the illness 754
[presumably in the sense of 'make it your charge to make him 788
ill'] of so and so, the son of so and so [mentioning the mother's
name]. Quickly, now!" The egg is then hidden in a tomb. 776

I am informed that this is a very interesting charm: black typifying evil, blood attracting spirits, and a tomb being the haunt of ghoulish spirits.[1] 754 776

It may be mentioned here that in all these charms, spells, and incantations it is necessary to write the name of the *mother* of the person whom it concerns. If the father's name is inserted instead the charm is abortive.

The events related in the following story are, so my informant strongly maintains, perfectly true.

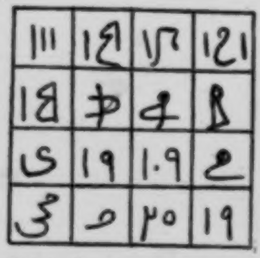


FIG. 116. A MAGIC SQUARE

754 789 158

In a small village in Upper Egypt there lived a man and his wife, the latter being very good-looking. One day a certain *ḳāḍi*[2] who was visiting the village in question saw her, and, falling in love with her on the spot, desired her as his wife. Knowing that she was already married, his only plan was to get rid of her husband, and so he determined to drive the unfortunate man mad. To accomplish this he induced a magician to write a charm on a piece of paper, which he tied to an inner branch high up on a palm-tree, where it could not easily be seen. The reason for his thus tying the charm to a palm-branch is the idea that, as the branches of the tree are blown this way and that in the wind in apparent confusion, so the brain of the man against whom the spell was concocted would be tortured and confused. Possibly the woman's husband got to know what had been done, but anyhow the poor man lost his reason. He tore off his clothes, tied a rope round his waist, and spoke at times in an unknown tongue.

"You must say," so he told the village boys who congregated around him, "'*Kee ree bra ra kee ree bru.*'"

He would also constantly mutter, "Kamaleh [his wife's name] went to the east, Kamaleh went to the east," repeating it over and

---

[1] I am indebted to Mr E. S. Thomas for this information.

[2] The word means 'judge,' as has been already explained, but it is also, as in this instance, a title given to a man who draws up marriage contracts, hears divorce cases in villages, and so on.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13 ●
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

E
759
789

already mentioned. Though in theory the figure is supposed to differ for the two sexes, in practice this rule does not always hold, for the figure in my possession is said to represent both sexes equally well. Having completed the writing on the paper figure, he hangs it from the centre of the branches by a red silken cord, places burning incense below it, and begins to recite the incantation supposed to be written on the figure.

E
776 ●

I should explain here that there are said to be seven kings beneath the earth, three of whom are more famous than the others. These three are called Ṭarish, Ḳasûra, and Zoba, the last having four heads. Their names are written on the figure. The other four kings are called Mīyemûn, Bārakān, el-Aḥmar (the red one), el-Abyāḍ (the white one).

E
789

The translation of the charm runs thus: "O King Ṭarish, O King Ḳasûra, O King Zoba who hast the four heads! Go on, three great kings of the underworld, and give your orders to your servants to bring so and so, the son or daughter of so and so [mentioning the mother's name]. If he [or she] is sitting make him [or her] stand up, and snatch him [or her] up, and mount him [or her] on a horse, and fly with him [or her] through the air, till you arrive at my house."[1]

E
754
791
787

A man of my acquaintance who knew this Coptic magician well was at one time very sceptical of his professed powers, and was inclined to think that he simply deceived the people with rather clever chicanery. The magician was well aware of this, and, on meeting him in the village one day, spoke to him and told him that he knew he had no faith in his magic. He then offered to demonstrate his powers, if the man would come with him then and there to his house. This he consented to do, and the magician conducted him into his private room, where he proceeded to act in the manner described above. He first called up an *'afrīt*, whom he ordered to bring before him the woman who had married the *ḳāḍi*. The *'afrīt* was, I suppose, either one of these kings or one of their messengers. My acquaintance declares that he saw the *'afrīt* quite plainly. After a minute or two the woman whom the magician had summoned appeared before them, and the man told me that he noticed that her dress was covered with flour. Presently the

E
[776]

---

[1] The actual writing on this figure is a jumble of letters. The translation given is what the magician told me should be written on it. No doubt constant careless copying has led to this meaningless inscription.

2; Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

754 791 787 magician dismissed her and she vanished. The woman had been brought from a village about three miles off, and, on inquiry, my acquaintance found that, at the time when she had been brought before them, she was making bread in her house, when her dress would, of course, be covered with flour! After this remarkable exhibition my acquaintance told me that he felt that the magician really had some extraordinary powers.

F C

754 789 782 776 The object of one of the spells possessed by my magician friend is "to make a king or any governor merciful to his subjects, and to ensure his granting any request made to him." To make such a spell effective the following procedure is adopted. At sunrise the magician makes a fire of wood, or, perhaps, charcoal, or cow-dung,[1] but not of *būṣ*. In this fire he will put two kinds of incense, ordinary frankincense and incense scented with musk. While the incense is burning the magician will repeat the names of the angels who are in the fourth heaven, and the name of their leader, seven times. The name of the leader of the angels in the fourth heaven is Kilīmya.

E C [779]

After he has finished this repetition he pronounces a formula beginning: "O angels, and leader of the angels of the fourth heaven! O Sun, which gives light all over the world!" Then he again addresses the sun, saying, "I pray you, O Sun, for the sake of the chief king [or governor, as the case may be, mentioning also his name and the name of his mother] that you may make his heart kind to so and so [*i.e.*, the suppliant]." Then the magician writes a charm and gives it to the petitioner.

F 789 The charm consists of a repetition of the names of the angels in the fourth heaven, and it must be worn under the left arm. Such charms are usually enclosed in a small leather case, which is suspended by a cord from the neck in such a way that it hangs underneath the arm.

F 754 If a man wishes to injure an enemy by making him unconscious he will go to a magician, who will tell him to bring some *'urūḳ el-fūweh* (roots of madder), the seeds of leeks, the fat of a crow, the fat of a tortoise (*fakrūn*),[2] and onion seeds. These ingredients, I am told, can be purchased at the shop of a village grocer. He must then light a fire and throw into it the five articles mentioned above. The smoke coming from this fire will make anyone who

---

F [177]

[1] See pp. 154 f.

[2] Professor Margoliouth tells me that *fakrūn* is a Berber word, so possibly this particular magical receipt was brought into the country by Arabs or Moors.

figure (Fig. 119), supposed to represent the man he wishes to injure. 754
If wax is used the figure is sometimes thrown into a fire, incantations being uttered by the magician at the same time. If clay is used the figure may be placed in water. As these figures disappear in the fire or water the man who is to be affected gradually [761]
dies. Such an extreme measure is very rarely resorted to—indeed, it would be exceedingly difficult to find a magician who would consent to carry it out, even with the promise of a large sum of money. There is supposed to be no cure for the man against whom such magic is worked; he is bound to die, as the figures cannot be rescued from the fire or the water.

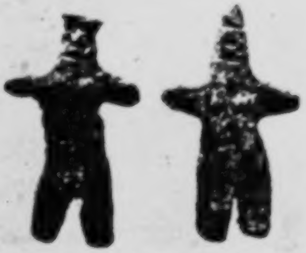


FIG. 119. WAX FIGURES USED IN BLACK MAGIC

Such wax or clay figures are more commonly used to bring about rather less direful results in the people whom they are supposed to represent. Needles or pins are stuck into them, or, if these are not available, the sharp points of palm-leaves may be used instead. Wherever the pin or other sharp point is inserted
into the figure the person who is represented will feel pain in the 754
corresponding part of his body, until the pin is removed from the 753
clay or wax figure. This pricking of the figure should always be done by the magician himself, who accompanies such actions with the recitation of magic spells. If the man who is being thus injured guesses what is causing him pain he will go to the magician and
induce him by larger payments of money to remove the pin from the [755]
figure. The moment this is done the pain felt by the man ceases.

Similar practices have been resorted to up to quite recent times 754
in more than one part of the British Isles, and are still current in 171
many parts of the world, as the collection of such objects in the Pitt-Rivers Museum at Oxford well demonstrates.

I have already at the beginning of this chapter stated that some 776
people are believed to be possessed by sheikhs, these sheikhs being 787
among the many subterranean peoples whose existence is firmly believed in by the peasants. Such sheikhs may be good or bad; if the former they will assist the person they possess, if the latter they will require to be constantly appeased.

Possession may come suddenly, no one knows how. It is also [152]

782 believed that if a woman gets a sudden fright she is particularly liable
776 to become possessed. For instance, I was told that a woman coming
152 after dark down the stairs which lead from the roof of a house to the ground floor, and carrying no light with her, may become frightened and fall, in which case a sheikh will come into her at once. She will realize what has happened and will ask the sheikh to tell her his name, whereupon he is believed to reply, "I am Sheikh so and so."

A man or woman may be possessed by several sheikhs of both sexes, and persons once possessed remain so till they die. As I have already explained above, a man or woman who is troubled by the sheikh who possesses them will consult a magician, who will inform them what the sheikh requires.

755 Sometimes it is necessary to have a ceremony called a *zâr*—in
787 fact, most people who are troubled with a sheikh either have such a performance at home or attend one which is being held in another person's house. When a *zâr* is being held all the villagers know about it, for they hear the sound of the drum and smell the incense, and all those who are afflicted with this kind of possession will be attracted thither. The sheikhs "make them go," so I was told. Certain songs are sung by the conductor of a *zâr* and his
[533] assistants. The meaning of the songs has, in some instances, been lost, and some of them may please one sheikh, but not another. Therefore, if a man is possessed by several sheikhs each in turn has to have the songs sung that please him.

One woman I know, after becoming possessed in this way, lost the use of both her legs, which swelled to an unusual size, and if she was moved she cried out with pain. Her brother, seeing her plight, arranged for her to have a *zâr*, bringing the conductor and his assistants to his house with their musical instruments—a drum and tambourines. The performance, which was held in an inner room, having begun, the patient suddenly got up and began to dance, and the sheikh spoke through her.

Her brother and the people assembled there asked him what he wanted, to which he replied, "I want nothing."

"Why should you then make her unhappy?" the brother and his friends inquired, "and where do you come from? Are you an Egyptian or a Sudanese?"

He replied, "She was always sitting about and unhappy because her children died, and so I came into her."

So they again asked, "What do you want?"

This time the sheikh said, " I want silver anklets and nice clothes, 755
and she must not be miserable." 787

After a week the ceremony called *ṣulḥeh* (p. 186) was celebrated,
the procedure being as follows. A sheep is killed, and some of 782
its blood is put on the dress of the woman who is possessed, 755
the people singing and playing their musical instruments all the 787
time. Seven candles are brought and placed round a large brass
tray set in the centre of the room, either on the floor or on a stand.
Seven kinds of sweetmeats, including dates, almonds, and raisins, [263]
are heaped up in the centre of the tray and covered with a bowl, on
the top of which is placed one of the candles. All the seven candles
are now lighted, and the people present, including the patient,
eat, an extra supply being offered to the officiating magician,
male or female. One of the people present hands the magician a
five-piastre piece, which he dips in the blood of the sheep. At the
ṣulḥeh held on behalf of the above-mentioned woman it was her
brother who gave the money. The coin is wrapped in a piece of
cotton stuff and given to the possessed man or woman, who will
have it enclosed in a leather case and wear it always hung from the [789]
neck and passed under the left arm. This is a charm, and is
supposed to be a present to the sheikh who possesses him or her.
Such a charm is called a *lâzimeh* (an obligatory gift).

On one of the occasions when I was present at a *zâr* a man came
in, sat down for some time, and then went out. I was told afterward [776]
that his sheikh did not like the songs that were being sung,
and so he could not remain in the room. When one of the possessed 787
women who was present at this *zâr* stood up and danced 755
she began to bark like a dog, and her whole expression changed,
her face becoming drawn and haggard. On another occasion a
man became very violent, hurling himself about and striking out, so
that it took three or four other men to hold him. When once this
fit of excitement had passed his face assumed a calm and placid look.

Women on these occasions wear special ornaments (Fig. 120), if [292]
they can afford them, and must wear good clothes. People who [301]
are possessed by sheikhs are often supposed to be able to divine
where a stolen article has been hidden. A young man of my
acquaintance once lost a key. Thinking that one of his fellow-students 787
had stolen it, he went to a man who was possessed, and,
after giving him a small sum of money, asked him which of the
students had stolen it. The man told him that none of them had

members of her own sex, and gives them the same somewhat 757 759 drastic treatment.

A headache is sometimes cured in the following way. The magi- 755 cian in his capacity as medicine-man writes out a charm, which is 789 hung on the patient's head over the spot where the pain is greatest. The charm must be written in a circle, and is, of course, in Arabic. Fig. 123 is an exact copy, only transliterated.

Sīdī Aḥmed el-Bedawī is one of the most celebrated sheikhs 776 in Egypt. His tomb is at Ṭanṭa, where a great festival is held in 796 his honour every year.

The following is a prescription for a disordered spleen. 757 278 262 The magician fetches leaves of *el-atl* (tamarisk), pours red vinegar on them, and boils this mixture on the fire, afterward pressing it through a sieve. The patient must drink a coffee-cup of this medicine early in [789] [755] the morning, repeating the dose for seven days, during which time he must eat no solid food, but should drink soup made by boiling a fowl.

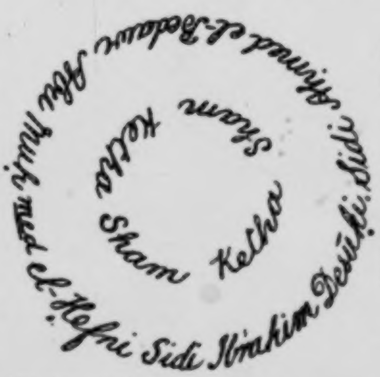

Sidi Ahmed el-Bedawi Abu Muhammed el-Hefni Sidi Ibrahim Desuki Sidi
Sham Ketha Sham Ketha

FIG. 123. CHARM TO CURE A HEADACHE

Distention of the stomach is a very common complaint among [164] the peasants, due, of course, to acute indigestion. In some parts of Egypt a boiled crow is prescribed as a cure for this complaint, and the patient, I am told, quickly experiences relief after eating this most repulsive food. Another more reasonable cure is prescribed by a medicine-man of my acquaintance. A small quantity of flour is mixed with a little yeast early in the morning; this must be left to rise in the sun till mid-day, when sufficient water is mixed with it to form a liquid. Soon after taking some of this preparation the patient must drink some soup made by boiling a fowl. The bowels will then act, and relief be soon experienced.

If a woman is suffering from prolonged labour, and birth is 845 difficult, her relatives will call in the aid of a magician. He writes 789 two charms, in the form of two magic squares, on two separate pieces of paper. One square is suspended by a string from the woman's waist, so that the inscribed paper hangs over her left

845 789 hip. The other charm is burned, and while it is burning the magician repeats the inscription on it once, after which the child is immediately born. An exact copy of the charm to be hung on the woman is reproduced here (Fig. 124). There is no key to it, so I was told.

[539]

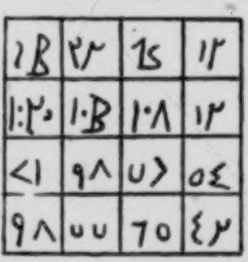


FIG. 124. THE CHARM TO BE SUSPENDED FROM THE WOMAN'S WAIST

The inscription recited by the magician is from the hundred and fourteenth chapter[1] of the Ḳorān, of which the following is a translation:

"Say, I fly for refuge unto the Lord of men, the King of men, the God of men, that He may deliver me from the mischief of the whisperer who slyly withdraweth, who whispereth evil suggestions into the breasts of men [*i.e.*, the Devil]; from *ginn* and men." The magician then adds: "Make your servant so and so, the daughter of so and so [mother's name], bear quickly by the help of God Almighty."

755 789 776 Here is a cure for a headache: "Cure for a headache. Very excellent. The charm should be written on a piece of red leather and hung over the temple of the patient, and, whoever wears it, it [the headache] will certainly be removed by the will of God." These are the words of the medicine-man himself, translated as literally as possible from the Arabic. The inscription consists of nothing but letters, the first groups standing for Syrian names of God, and the others for the names of seven good sheikhs.

755 The following is a cure for fever. This prescription was given me by a sheikh who is renowned for his powers as a medicine-man, and he declares that by means of it he has cured many people. The sheikh takes four small pieces of paper, and on the first he writes "Hell is hot"; on the second "Hell is cold"; on the third "Hell is thirsty"; and on the fourth "Hell is hungry." All the letters of each word in these inscriptions must be well separated from each other. He then puts seven seeds of *kammūn iswid* (black cumin) on each piece of paper. Having done this, he takes a short, narrow strip of leather, which must be old, such as is used for making sieves for winnowing. This piece of leather must be divided into four portions, one for each paper. A candle like those used in Coptic churches is broken into four pieces, and

---

[1] One of those chapters of the Ḳorān which are often utilized as amulets.

added to the other articles on the papers. These papers are now 755
rolled up with their contents, and each roll is tied round with spider's web. When an attack of fever comes on some olive oil is brought, and the patient must dip the first roll of paper in it. Then a fire is made in a pottery bowl, and the roll of paper is placed in it. As it burns the patient should let the fumes go up his or her clothes. If the patient is cured after this first burning of a roll he need not use the others. But if he has a return of the fever he must use the next roll, and so on, until he is cured.

All inscribed charms, so I was informed by the sheikh from whom I obtained the above information, should be written with a reed pen, a dry maize-stalk being generally used for this purpose. The reason he gave me for this rule is that the reed is made by the hand of God, while a metal pen is made by the hand of man.

The same sheikh wrote out for me a cure for a woman with "an issue of blood." A pure white plate must be brought, on the inner surface of which an inscription is written with black ink. Fresh water must then be put in the plate, and the patient must drink it. She will then be cured by the will of God Almighty. The ink with which the inscription is written comes off into the water, and the efficacy lies in the drinking of the inscribed sentences in this way.

A fortnight before I arrived at the sheikh's village he had cured a woman by this means. A literal translation of his prescription is as follows:

"A remedy which stops the flow of blood. Tried and true. 755
You shall write it in a white plate, and it is washed out with water, 841
and the woman shall drink it fasting before breakfast, and she shall be released from it[1] [*i.e.*, her illness] by the will of God most High. And this is what you write: 'Shalāsh, Shalāsh, Shinyūsh, Shinyūsh! Stop the blood for the sake of the Right [one of the names of God]. The blood shall be cut off from so and so, the daughter of so and so [mentioning the mother's name], for the sake of Damrurāg. Dry up, O blood, from the womb of so and so, the daughter of so and so [again mentioning the mother's name], as the sea dried up for Moses, and as Mary bore Jesus.'"[2]

Shalāsh and Shinyūsh are, so I was told, names of God in 776
Syrian. Possibly they are very old words, and, on that account, 755

---

[1] Or cured.

[2] Evidently referring to a belief connected with the manner of the birth of Christ, which is, I understand, current among Muslims.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927

MR13 Fellahin MR13

Upper Egypt

COPTS MR10

F
776
755
considered the more efficacious in an inscribed charm of this character. Names and words, evidently ancient, the meanings of which are now quite lost, often occur in modern Egyptian inscribed charms.

C
755
Here is a cure for dry scabs on the skin, given me by a Coptic magician. Early in the morning, before washing or eating, pass one finger over the front teeth and then rub it over the scabs. This should be repeated three, five, or seven times, accompanied by the repetition of the following words: "O dry scab, come into two pieces, and go to the skin of a dog."

A man whom I have known for several years was suffering from a dry scab on his left wrist, so he went to a doctor for a remedy, but the scab did not disappear. On returning to his village he spoke to the Coptic magician who also resided there, and told him about his complaint. The magician advised the treatment described above, and after carrying out these instructions the scab, so the man told me, quickly disappeared!

F
755
The following is another cure for the same complaint. Get a pod of lupine after the harvest, and after the seeds within it have been prepared for food. Then press the pod with one finger three, five, or seven times, repeating meanwhile the same words as in the previous cure.
F
252
251
The lupine is prepared for food by frequent immersion in hot water; the water is then drained off, and the lupines mixed with salt. They will then keep for a considerable time.

F
755
If a child has a cough the mother may go to a magician, who takes one of the narrow leaves off a palm-branch and writes a charm on it. He then rolls up the leaf, tying it with a string which is long enough to hang round the child's neck (Fig. 125). I have seen several children wearing these supposed cures for a cough, and I have one or two in my possession.

In Asyûṭ Province I was told that three leaves must be plucked from a palm-tree that has been inherited by the sick child's family from a relative, and that the following charms should be written on each leaf:

F
[776]

"Samkin, Samkin, Samkin.
Sam'akin, Sam'akin, Sam'akin.
Sam'ukin, Sam'ukin, Sam'ukin."[1]

"Go away, coughing, for the sake of the Mighty God, and leave as soon as you can."

---

[1] These are said to be Syrian names of God.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

754 cast the evil eye over it. To counteract this she will take as many
755 small lumps of salt as there were visitors, and throw them one by
855 one on the fire, which leaps up into flame each time. As the flames burst forth so, she believes, will the evil eye burst, and all harm caused by it be taken away from the child. This is a common practice among both Copts and Muslims all over Egypt.

754 Again, if a woman, whether Copt or Muslim, has a baby that is
755 constantly crying she believes that it has had the evil eye cast over it. In order to dispel the mischief done, the child's grandmother (either paternal or maternal), keeping it well away from her body, carries it to the *zīr* (see p. 137), round which she passes it seven times. As she does this she repeats seven times, "O angel of the water, take away the evil eye from this child." Water
[776] being very valuable in Egypt, it is believed that every vessel containing it possesses a guardian angel of the water, and this angel, it is thought, will remove the ill effects of the evil eye from the child.

When admiring a child or any other of your neighbour's posses-
[576] sions, it is the correct thing to say, "*Mā shā' Allāh*" ("What God willeth is") or "*Ṣalla 'a 'n-Nebi*" ("Bless the Prophet"), in order that your praise may not be taken for envy and that there may be no suspicion that you are casting the evil eye upon the object of your admiration.

114 The first year that I lived in an Egyptian village I fell ill two or
754 three times with fever. The villagers had never come into close
755 contact before with any Englishwoman, and so every article of my dress was noticed and commented on, as well as my eyes, the
753 colour of my cheeks, and so on. When riding through the village many kindly and complimentary remarks were made: "See, she has the eyes of a cat"—a great compliment, to the minds of the villagers—"How beautiful is the colour of her cheeks!" etc. When I fell ill the second time my attendant, a most faithful and devoted man, was convinced that it was entirely due to some one having cast the evil eye upon me. He therefore harangued the villagers, and told them that they were, of course, quite right to admire me, and that all that they said was true, but that in future such remarks were not to be made without one at least of the protecting phrases mentioned above. The consequence was that the next time I went out riding I was followed by a whole concourse of people, men, women, and children, all ejaculating as I

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

751 idea is, I suppose, that it is on the first camel that the eye would
754 be cast. A pattern is sometimes cut in the hair on one or more
822 of the legs of a camel. I was told that this is often done to keep
231 the evil eye off that part of the animal's body. For if its legs are
firm and well covered with flesh some one may cast the eye over
it, and the camel will fall down.

754 A certain woman in Upper Egypt who was well known to possess the evil eye saw a very fine camel coming along one of the paths in the cultivation. "Oh," she said, "what a splendid camel!" whereupon the animal fell down and broke one of its legs. The truth of this story was vouched for by my informant, who declared that he saw the accident happen and heard what the woman said.

852 If a child under eight years of age is thin and delicate the mother,
755 or, if her husband will not allow her to do so, a neighbour, will
carry it to the bank of the Nile on the first day of the inundation,
782 taking with her some dates and *kishk*.[1] She then stands at the edge
262 of the water, holding the child in her arms, and makes it throw the
dates and *kishk*, one by one, into the river. As the child throws
in each article it must say to the water, "As you increase in depth,
may I increase in strength!" After this the woman undresses the
child and bathes it in the river. It is believed that the child will
then grow steadily stronger. Angels are supposed to be in the
[776] water, and they, it is thought, will take the dates and the *kishk*,
and, in return for these gifts, will remove the weakness from the
child.

755 A child may suffer from a cough accompanied by gasping, as if it could hardly breathe. This may happen at any time until it has passed the age of seven years.[2] To cure it the mother, or grandmother (either paternal or maternal), or a woman friend, takes the child early in the morning to the enclosure (*zarībeh*) in which the sheep and goats are kept in the fields at night. She enters the *zarībeh* and hands the child over to the shepherd, who lays it on its back on the ground, and, taking a knife, places the blunt edge against the child's throat, pretending to cut it. The child will then start crying, whereupon the man will remove the knife and return the child to the woman who brought it.

000 Sheep are regarded as very gentle animals, and are supposed

---

[1] Small cakes, sometimes round like large marbles, and made of flour and milk.

[774] [2] After this age the mother's *ḳarīneh* cannot injure it. For fuller information on this subject see pp. 71 ff.

SUPERSTITIONS

Sheep are regarded as very gentle animals, and are supposed F 755
on that account to be watched over by angels, who, on hearing the [825]
child cry, will drive away the mother's *ḳarîneh*, who has caused 776
the illness by clutching at the child's throat. 774

If a boy or child under eight years of age cannot walk the
mother believes that her *ḳarîneh* has sent an *'afrît* into the child. F
To cure this infirmity she calls in a neighbour to help her. The [753]
mother seats the child on the ground, and places in its lap a number of dates and some *kishk*. The neighbour and child then go to the mosque, taking the dates and *kishk* with them. Friday is a favourite day for such a visit, and they arrange to arrive at noon, when the men are praying inside the building. The woman leaves the child seated outside the doorway, and herself retires to a short distance. When the people begin to come out of the mosque they see the dates and the *kishk* spread out on the child's dress, and they all scramble to get their share of them. This frightens the child, and it begins to scream. On hearing its cries the woman who brought it to the mosque goes and takes it up in her arms and carries it home.

It is believed that the screams of the frightened child will scare away the *'afrît* in its legs, and that after this it will be able to walk.

Christians employ the same cure for their children who are F
similarly affected, and, be it noted, take them to the mosque, not C
to the church. An old acquaintance of mine, who is a Copt, told 755
me that a child of his was at one time unable to walk, but that it 753
could do so after thus visiting the village mosque. He added that 776
he had taken the child to several doctors in Cairo and Asyûṭ, but 774
that they had been unable to do it any good!

In a large town in Upper Egypt there are two mosques, in both F
of which there is an ancient pillar. People who are ill with jaundice 755
go to either of these mosques and lick the pillar, and then, so 778
I am informed, speedily recover. I visited one of the mosques and at once detected the ancient pillar, which stands in the main part of the building among the other pillars supporting the roof.

In Egypt, as in many other countries, hair-cuttings and -combings F 754
and nail-parings are carefully kept, for if anyone else obtained possession of them he would, by their means, be able to gain an influence over, and so injure, the original owners. Bones from which the meat has been eaten, skins of fruit, and the like are also, for the same reason, either carefully buried or burned in a fire.

SUPERSTITIONS

It is a common belief in Egypt, as, indeed, in some other countries also, that the soul can leave the body during sleep. 774 513 It is therefore considered unsafe to wake anyone suddenly, for fear the soul should not have time to return to the body of the sleeper. Such awakening must be done very slowly, so as to give the soul ample time to return. I am not quite clear as to what happens if the soul does not get back in time; probably the sleeper's personality changes, or he becomes imbecile.

There is a strong belief among the peasants that the dead can appear to the living, speak with them, and issue commands. 775 776 The strength of this belief can be seen in connexion with the sheikh cult, discussed in Chapter XV. There are a number of ghost stories current in the country, the ghost being usually regarded as the dead man's *'afrīt*, which, as will be seen in the following chapter, is not the soul, but a separate entity. The two following ghost stories may interest my readers, the second ghost having only just begun to 'walk' a week or so before I arrived at the dead man's village.

The engine which controls the machinery for irrigating the fields 407 of the rich *'omdeh* (headman) of a certain village is worked by 312 steam, and the boiler is covered with a large sheet of iron. The steam is shut off late every evening, at about seven-thirty, and is turned on again at daybreak. To turn it on a man has to stand on the sheet of iron above the reservoir. One day the son of the assistant engineer made a mistake, saying that he had turned on the steam when he had not done so. The consequence was that more was generated than the boiler could contain, and it promptly exploded. [165] An unfortunate man who was standing on the iron sheet was crushed against the ceiling and killed instantly. One night later a man who was sleeping in the engine-room with some 775 of his fellow-workmen began to call out. His companions were aroused from sleep by his cries, and asked him what was the matter. He told them that he had seen the man who had been killed, and that he was wailing and crying "*Akh! akh! akh!*" ("Alas! alas! alas!"), and also had tried to poke out his (the speaker's) eyes with two of his fingers. Since this incident a great explosion is heard in the engine-room every night at twelve o'clock. The first time it was heard the guards and other people thought that there had been another accident, but, when they went to look, nothing had occurred, and the engine was not working. The

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER XIV

ʿAFĀRĪT

776

AMONG the various supernatural beings who figure conspicuously in the life of Egyptian peasants are the ʿ*afārīt* (singular ʿ*afrīt*). This word is usually translated in dictionaries 'devils' or 'demons,' as distinct from the *ginn*, who are, properly speaking, the good spirits.[1] The peasants, however, so I have found, employ the words *ginn* and ʿ*afārīt* indiscriminately, the latter word being more commonly used. The ʿ*afārīt* are believed to be made of fire, and to have been created many thousands of years before Adam. They may be the chosen assistants of people of evil intent who wish to harm others; they may also, of their own accord, enter into anyone who is doing something wrong, thereby laying himself open to such possession. They are sometimes quite harmless, and will do no injury to a human being unless they are interfered with.

The ʿ*afārīt* are supposed to live under the earth, where they form an organized society, with a king at their head. They haunt, so it is believed, springs and wells in uninhabited regions, such as the desert, and the narrow paths which wind about through the cultivation. There are other places, even on high roads, which are known by those versed in such matters to 'belong,' as they say, to ʿ*afārīt*.

[114]

On a recent visit to Egypt a charming Rest-house with a good garden was generously placed at my disposal by the Egyptian Government (Fig. 134). It was my custom, when the weather was hot, to sit out in the garden every evening, where some of my village friends would join me, drink coffee, and have a chat. Among them was a small dealer in antiquities, who had a considerable knowledge of the folklore of the people. He told me one evening in the course of conversation that the road which ran past my house had, some years back, been much haunted by ʿ*afārīt*, and that a portion of the

---

[1] See E. W. Lane, *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1871), vol. i, pp. 283 ff., and also his translation of *The Arabian Nights* (London, 1883), vol. i, pp. 26 f. (notes to Introduction).

796 [346] [199] ground facing the house on which a mosque has lately been erected, had especially belonged to them. They were, of course, driven from this spot when the mosque was built, and since the introduction of motors and telephones, to which they strongly object, the road also had been made uninhabitable for them. They have therefore taken refuge in the Rest-house garden, where several people claim to have seen them. Three such appearances occurred during my residence.

One night, while my guard was enjoying a peaceful sleep, he suddenly awoke in terror and saw towering above him a huge figure in the form of a man, which remained standing thus for a minute or two and then vanished. On another occasion the same guard saw an *'afrīt*, in the form of a dog, run round the garden, pass the windows of the Government offices overlooking it, and then vanish. About a week later, as my servant was crossing the garden on his way from the house to the kitchen, carrying a lighted [393] lamp in his hand, the light was suddenly put out, though there was no wind, and presently he saw a shadow run along in the same direction as that taken by the dog. This, he said, when he recounted to me his adventure, was an *'afrīt*.

[349] [139]

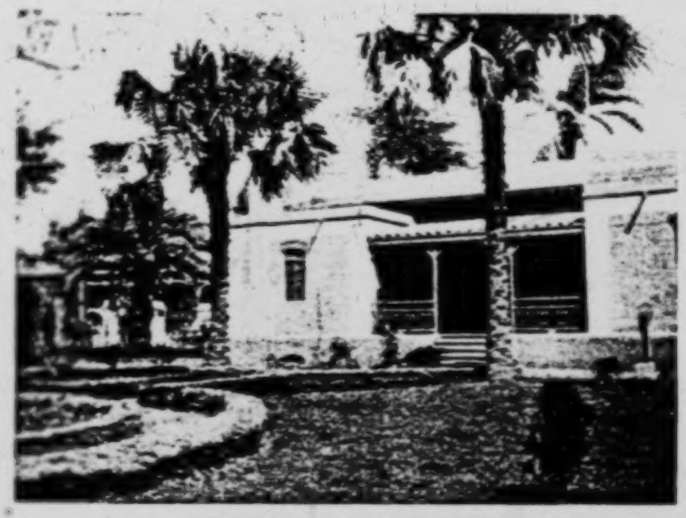


FIG. 134. THE REST-HOUSE AND ITS HAUNTED GARDEN

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

'AFĀRĪT

F
776
372
782

The *'afārīt* are, as I have said, supposed to be made of fire, so they are naturally found in their native element. Therefore, before extinguishing, or casting anything into, a fire it is usual to say "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful," thus giving the *'afrīt* who may be in the fire time to withdraw. Also, before pouring water or other liquid on to the ground many people say "*Dastūr*" ("Permission") or "*Dastūr yā mubārakīn*" ("Permission, O blessed ones"), in case there may be *'afārīt* near by. For should there be *'afārīt* in the fire at the moment that it was put out, or should the water touch them when poured on to the ground, they would take revenge on the person who had not duly warned them of what he or she was going to do.

F
[791]
[241]

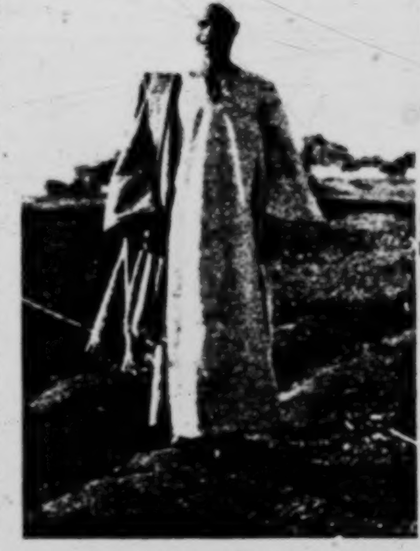


FIG. 135. A MAGICIAN OF MY ACQUAINTANCE

F
C
26A
782
776

Before beginning to eat, and also before removing any food from the room in which the household stores are kept, both Muslims and Copts will say "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful." This, I am told, is to prevent the *'afārīt* from taking any of the food. Copts will sometimes say "In the name of the Cross," and will make the sign of the Cross over the food, for the same purpose. Again, a woman will make use of one of these two phrases before beginning to mix the flour for making bread.

F
C
[252]

F
791
776
782

A magician is supposed to be able to control *'afārīt* and to make them appear before him. He can also issue orders to their king, which the latter has to obey. The magician calls up the *'afārīt* from below the earth by reciting incantations, burning incense the while, and sometimes pouring out a libation of water (see p. 193).

F
755
791

People who are afflicted by *'afārīt* regularly apply for assistance to magicians, who are often men of benevolent character, and who,

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

F 755 791 when their petitioners are poor, will exercise their magic powers on behalf of the sufferers without exacting a fee.

F 776 492 The ʿ*afārīt* may appear of their own will to ordinary individuals, sometimes in human form, but more usually in the shape of an animal, such as a dog, a cat, or a donkey. Again, they may be seen by animals when invisible to man. Therefore when a donkey refuses to pass a certain spot in the desert or cultivation his rider knows that an ʿ*afrīt* bars the way, and he usually has to dismount and forcibly lead his ass past the danger zone.[1]

E 791 776 588 Some magicians are supposed to be married to female ʿ*afārīt*, and to have children by them. This is a belief to be found, not only in Egypt, but in other countries also. A man thus married will never disclose the fact, but it becomes known among his relatives, who sometimes, looking for him in the place where he sleeps at night, will find that he has disappeared. They then suppose that he has gone to his wife "beneath the earth," but they will not dare speak of the matter to him. E [581] This is believed of a magician who is well known to me, and who lives in a small village in Upper Egypt. His relatives have constantly urged him to marry, since the Egyptian peasants consider it a disgrace for a man to remain a bachelor. This magician has always refused to take to himself a wife, and has turned a deaf ear to the entreaties of his family. Accordingly, they now believe that he has an ʿ*afrīteh* (feminine form of ʿ*afrīt*) as his wife, as sometimes he is not found sleeping on his mat at night. Since he is a Copt he cannot take a human being as a second wife, as a Muslim would be able to do in similar circumstances. Such a supernatural wife helps her husband in all his work as a magician; indeed, his powers are often attributed entirely to the assistance he receives from his wife beneath the earth.

E 791 789 Most magicians possess books, usually manuscripts written by themselves, containing numbers of incantations for repetition, directions as to the performance of the accompanying rites, and also charms in the form of magic squares. E [408] These spells may have been in use in the magician's family for several generations, and handed down orally from father to son, but in more recent times committed to paper, now that the knowledge of writing is commoner among the villagers.

The Coptic magician mentioned above has several such manu-

---

[1] *Cf.* the story of Balaam and his ass.

scripts, one of which he designates the "Book of Adam." He has 791
with great labour collected and written out magical cures and pro- 789
tections for those troubled by *'afārīt*, and these form the contents
of one of the books. He learnt his art, so he told me, from another
magician, who was not a member of his family, but under whom
he served a long apprenticeship.

F
During my sojourn in Egypt I have been given many accounts 755
of the wonderful cures wrought by magicians on people possessed 753
by *'afārīt*. I wrote the details down when they were given to me, 123
and some of them may be interesting to my readers. The names
of the people concerned, and the villages in which they live, are
suppressed, in deference to their feelings; indeed, it would be
a breach of confidence to divulge them. Such happenings are not
usually discussed with foreigners, and were related to me only
because I am regarded by the villagers as a trustworthy friend.

F
A young man in Upper Egypt became very angry with his wife 593
one night while she was sitting in front of the fire cooking the 152
evening meal. In his anger he took a pottery water-bottle (a
ḳulleh) and struck her with it. In doing this he broke the bottle,
and the water and some of the pieces of pottery fell into the fire, F
extinguishing it. The next moment he heard a voice saying to 776
him, "You have broken the head of one of my children, so I will 152
come into you [*i.e.*, possess you]." The man thereupon became 158
mad, and began to tear his own face, and strike all those who came
near him. Some of his relatives, seeing his terrible condition, proceeded to bind his hands behind his back and tie his feet together at the ankles, to prevent him doing further harm to himself or anyone else; but he continued to cry out and to speak meaningless words. His relatives took him to one doctor after another, but they could do him no good, and he continued in the same condition of violent madness.

F
At last, when he had remained in this state for three months, 756
they went to see a certain sheikh. This man is a magician, and 755
of a charitable character, and they begged him to cure the unfortunate man, pleading at the same time his poverty. The sheikh, who possesses (for he is still alive) many books of incantations and charms such as those mentioned above, listened sympathetically to their pleading, and consented to visit the sufferer, but he told them that they must first bring him a small piece of one of the garments belonging to the madman. They went home and

756 returned shortly with a piece of the material demanded, on which
755 the sheikh wrote some magic words. After doing this he told
[153] the anxious relatives that the man was possessed by an *'afrīt*, and thereupon, according to his promise, accompanied them to the madman's house.

755 Here he found the patient lying on the ground covered with a blanket, with his hands tied behind his back and his feet bound together at the ankles with strong cords. The sheikh then started to burn incense in a dish and to read some of the incantations from one of his books. Whereupon the madman tore asunder the cords which bound him, and began to strike out right and left.
[787] When the sheikh asked him why he behaved in this way the *'afrīt*,
[776] speaking through the madman, replied, "You have an unclean
[841] woman in the room."[1] On hearing this the sheikh was very angry, for no unclean woman must ever be present on such an occasion. So he ordered all the people, and there were many present, to leave the room, with the exception of a few of the man's male relatives. Crowds always collect on the slightest excuse in all Egyptian villages, offering conflicting advice at the top of their voices. On such an occasion as this of the sheikh's visit to the madman the room where the patient lay would have been packed with sympathizers and eager sightseers.

755 When the crowd had been banished from the room the madman
776 became quiet, and the sheikh continued to burn incense and to recite magic sentences. The sheikh finally told the *'afrīt* to leave the man, but he replied (of course speaking through the man), "From what part of his body shall I leave him? May I come out through one of his eyes, which will then become blind, as a punishment for his breaking the head of one of my children?" The sheikh replied that he would not permit him to do this, but that he was to come out of the big toe of one foot. The sheikh then placed a *ḳulleh* on the ground, and said to the *'afrīt*, "I shall know that you have left the man if you knock over this *ḳulleh*."

Presently, as he continued reading his incantations, the sheikh saw a few drops of blood fly from the man's big toe toward the *ḳulleh*, which was immediately flung with a crash against the wall. The madman then sat up and said, "Where am I? And who are you?" After a while he recognized all his relatives, whom he had not known during the whole period of his madness. They

---

[841] [1] A menstruous woman is always regarded as unclean.

COPTS MR10

F

asked him where he had been, to which he replied, "I have been 755
among the '*afārīt*." 776 ●

Since that day he has been perfectly sane, and is now living happily in his native village.

The following is another case related to me in 1923, the incident 791
occurring, so I was told, in 1920. In a town in Upper Egypt 776
there dwells a somewhat celebrated Coptic magician, whom we will call the Sheikh B. He is known to be married to an '*afrīteh*, because he disappears every night, but neither his wife nor her children—for the people have discovered that she has offspring by the sheikh—are ever seen. They may come up above ground sometimes while people are talking about them, but they remain invisible. F C

The upper story of a certain house in this town was occupied by 342
a Coptic clerk employed in a large business firm, while in the lower 464
story lived a man whose wife had no children. The husband of F C
this woman, distressed at having no offspring, begged the Sheikh B
to come and see his wife, hoping that he might be able to give her 842
some charm or read some incantation which would cure her barrenness. 755
Accordingly, one evening, at a late hour, the magician arrived. F C

The occupant of the upper story was in the habit of praying 782
every night and morning. On the evening on which the Sheikh B 756
arrived this man was reciting some of the Psalms of David in a loud voice. On hearing these recitations the Sheikh B cried out, [152]
"Oh, make this man stop reading, for he is interrupting me!" Some of the people who had assembled to see the sheikh went up to beg the man to stop reciting. However, he paid no attention to their request, and read through all the Psalms, repeating them in a loud voice, so that they could easily be heard in the rooms beneath him. F C

The Sheikh B then cried out to him, "Oh, stop reciting these 782
Psalms, you have burnt one of my sons"; for the sheikh had 776
brought up many '*afārīt* from under the earth, including his own 755
sons, so that he might consult them as to what should be done for the childless woman. F

Finally the clerk went to bed; but as soon as he had laid himself
down he felt that there were people in the room, and suddenly 513
found himself being lifted off the bed. He opened his eyes, and 776
saw four small '*afārīt*, dressed in quaint coats and trousers of many

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927

MR13 Fellahin MR13 ●

Upper Egypt

COPTS MR10

E
513
776
[788]

colours, and wearing tall, peaked hats. Two of them held him by the feet, and two held his head. He immediately crossed himself, and said, "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." At the mention of these sacred names the *'afārīt* dropped him on the floor and disappeared.

E
755
787
776
152

I was told that the Sheikh B's anger was aroused because the man, by his recitation of the Psalms, had stopped his communications with the *'afārīt*; and so, in order to punish him, he sent the four *'afārīt* to frighten him. Since that date the Sheikh B has refused to enter that house.

C
796
799

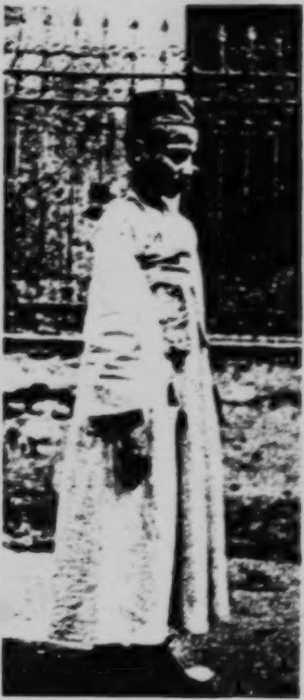


FIG. 136. A COPTIC CHOIR-BOY

C
[592]
[142]

The following story tells how a naughty boy was punished by an *'afrīt*. It should be explained here that it is the custom among the Copts for men and boys to gather together every evening during the month of *Kiyahk*, which begins on December 9 or 10, to recite from memory special prayers and passages from the Bible in Coptic. Thus engaged they remain in the church till daybreak, when the priest comes for the service.

C
[198]
[871]

Coptic boys acquire a smattering of the ancient language when at the school of the *'arīf*, the title of the officiant who leads the singing in the church.

C
776

On one such occasion the boy just alluded to was in the church with a number of his companions, taking part in the recitations. He left the church for a few minutes, and on his way back saw a very fine donkey standing in the open space in front of the church. The sight of this donkey proving to be irresistible to him, he immediately mounted it, and, digging his heels into its sides, urged it to go faster and faster round and round the open space. Suddenly the donkey began to grow taller and taller, till it reached the height of about five metres It then suddenly vanished, and the

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

C
boy fell to the ground, where a stone struck one of his eyes and 776
destroyed the sight. The boy then knew that the donkey was really an *'afrīt* which had assumed animal form, and presently he heard it saying, "Don't come here again. If you do I will injure you!"

Up to the present time the boy, who is now a grown man, has never dared to return to this church for fear of the *'afrīt*. He told my informant this story himself, and swears to the truth of it. F

The *'afārīt*, as I have already explained, sometimes leave their 776 ●
subterranean home and come above ground. It is therefore con- 784
sidered dangerous to stamp on the ground, to strike it with a stick, F
or to throw anything violently on it. Such acts should be especi- [823]
ally avoided at night, when the *'afārīt* are believed to come up in large numbers. If a man, therefore, has to walk some distance at night he is glad if he can get a fisherman to accompany him, for F
he believes that then no *'afrīt* will come near him. The *'afārīt* [226]
are afraid of fishermen and of their nets, and when they see these [227]
men throwing their nets they run away in terror. One woman told me that the *'afārīt* fear that they may get caught in the nets. F

C
A few days after I had left a certain village in Upper Egypt a boy who was employed by the *'omdeh* (headman of the village) [464]
F C
was in the building containing the machinery installed by the *'omdeh* for pumping up water for irrigating his fields. It was at [241]
night, and for some reason or other the boy happened to stamp on the ground with his feet. Soon after he lay down to sleep, but was aroused by an *'afrīt* who tried to pluck out his eyes. The boy cried out, "Oh, leave me, and forgive me!" But the *'afrīt* refused, saying that when he had stamped on the ground he had injured the head of one of his children. The boy cried out, and then, C
being a Copt, crossed himself, whereupon the *'afrīt* disappeared. [788]

F
That *'afārīt* are capable of kindly actions is shown in the following belief. A boy who is still uncircumcised may be mysteriously 776
carried away when sleeping beside his mother at night. He will be brought back to his sleeping-place on the same night, and on F
C
the following morning his mother will find that he has been circumcised, the operation having been much better done than if it had [304]
been performed by the village barber; moreover, the wound will C
be found to have already healed. In such a case it is believed that F
the boy has a good *ḳarīn* who has brought good *'afārīt* to perform [774]
this painful operation painlessly.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

THE FELLAHIN OF UPPER EGYPT

F
782 Before people take up residence in a newly built house, or com-
342 plete a well for a water-wheel, or use new machinery for irrigation
241 or grinding corn, an ox or a sheep, or, if the people are poor, a
312 fowl, must be killed on the threshold of the house, or close to the
776 engine, or inside the well before the water-level is reached. This
is done in case these spots may be haunted by *'afārīt*, who
will trouble the owners if not first appeased by the blood of
a sacrifice.

F
165
623
312
Within a year three people were killed by the irrigation machinery

F
[291]
[152]

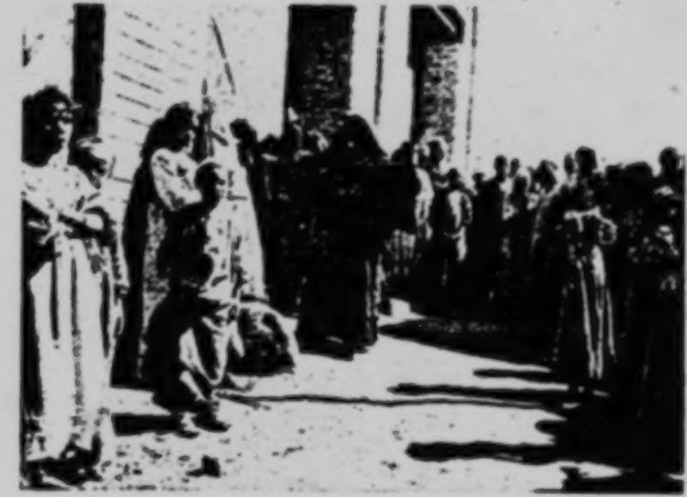


FIG. 137. THE MOTHER OF THE BOY WHO WAS KILLED WAILING OUTSIDE THE 'OMDEH'S ENGINE-HOUSE

belonging to the *'omdeh* of the village mentioned on p. 235 (see also
Fig. 137). One, a woman, was killed not long before I arrived
there, a boy was caught in the machinery and killed during my
F
visit, and a man was killed in a similar way just after I had left.
782 This *'omdeh* had made no sacrifice before using the engine, so a
776 number of the villagers went to him and demanded that he should
kill an ox on the spot. This he did, about a month after I had
gone, and some of the blood of the animal was sprinkled on the
engine. Apparently this has appeased the *'afārīt*, for I have
C
heard of no accidents since the sacrifice was made!

625 There is an old Copt in that village, considerably over ninety

years of age, who used to be a village guard. He told a friend of C 625
mine that he knew that the ground on which the *'omdeh's* engine
now stands used to be the haunt of *'afārīt*, for, when doing patrols C
at night round the outskirts of the village, he had sometimes seen 776
on that spot a plough pulled by oxen and driven by a man, or 625
sometimes a threshing-machine with the oxen and their driver,
all made of fire. As this guard approached them he would cross C
himself, whereupon the *'afārīt* who had assumed these forms 788
would disappear.

If a woman fears that *'afārīt* are in her house she puts a *ḳulleh* F
of water on the floor of one of the rooms, and near it she places 776
some bread and salt, leaving them in this position during the 782
night. This protects the whole house, and effectually prevents
any *'afārīt* from entering it.

Nightmare and sleepwalking are supposed to be caused by F 776
'afārīt, and if a child suffers from either of these complaints it is 828
a sign that an *'afrīt* has entered its body. This may have happened 513
because the child has done something wrong; perhaps, so it was 784
suggested to me, it had plucked some of the ears of corn from a 685
field belonging to a neighbour. If a Coptic child sleepwalks or
has nightmare its parents call in a priest, who tells them to bring C
seven *ḳanādīl* (old-fashioned saucer-lamps, with floating wicks). 828
The priest then asks for a jar of water, and prays seven special 513
prayers, burning incense meanwhile in a censer. As he finishes 782
one prayer he puts out one lamp, after a second prayer a second 755
lamp, and so on, till all the prayers are said and all the lamps
extinguished. He now tells the parents to place the jar of water
on the roof of the house, where it must remain for one night. On
the following morning the child is bathed in the water, after which,
it is believed, he will be cured.

Among the Muslims if a child is affected in this way the parents F 789
go to a magician, who writes a charm of protection for the child
to wear.

In addition to his soul (*rôḥ*) every human being is believed to F 774
possess an *'afrīt* which leaves his body at death. In certain cir- 775
cumstances it may be a menace to any person who comes near it. 825
Animals also have an *'afrīt*. This belief especially attracted my
attention recently. A little dog which had been badly injured
took refuge in the bathroom of my house. My servant told me
that he was sure it could not live, and that, before it died, he must

COPTS MR10

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

E 797 776

Coptic saints receive the appellation Māri (Saint), and many of the beliefs and ceremonies associated with them are similar to those connected with the Muslim sheikhs.

E 766 346

A Coptic saint is usually buried within the precincts of a monastery or church, which may be dedicated to him. A popular saint may be honoured by the dedication of numerous monasteries and churches to his memory, in all of which he is equally venerated.

E 778 776 782

Sometimes the same saint may be claimed by Muslims and Copts alike, in which case the grave is often situated in an open space, possibly under the shadow of a tree or trees, the lower branches of which are covered with votive offerings contributed by the followers of both religions. With the Christians as well as with the Muslims candles are a favourite form of votive offering, and when the saint is claimed by the adherents of both faiths their candles may be seen burning side by side.

E 778 346 [137] E [464] E 776 781

Many years ago, on a spot in the cultivation in Upper Egypt where a church dedicated to Māri Mīna el-ʿAgayebi now stands, there was a square plot of *ḥalfa*-grass. This site was claimed by the Muslims as the burial-place of a sheikh. There was a very poor man who lived in the town adjoining these fields and who acted as *farrāsh*[1] at the sugar factory in the same town. One night while he was sleeping he felt some one give him a kick. This naturally aroused him, and he saw standing beside him a man whose face and form were of great beauty, and who was clothed in white garments. This man told the poor *farrāsh* that he was Māri Mīna el-ʿAgayebi, that he wished him to build a church, and that he would himself indicate the spot on which he wished it to be erected. The saint told the *farrāsh* that he had called him to do this work instead of a rich man, as the latter would boast that by his riches he had built the church, whereas the saint himself would supply the poor man with all that he needed for the erection of the sacred building.

Māri Mīna then led the *farrāsh* to the patch of *ḥalfa*-grass in the fields, and told him to measure two metres from the edge of the *ḥalfa*-grass toward the east and two metres from the edge of the *ḥalfa*-grass toward the west. Then he was to dig the whole plot thus measured out to a depth of two and a half metres. When

---

[1] Literally, sweeper—the title given to servants employed by the Government to keep the Rest-houses clean, also to men employed in other public buildings in the same capacity.

E

he had done this he would first find a very deep well, and westward 776
from this he would find a large quantity of bricks, enough for the 781
building of the church; while to the east he would find piles of white lime to be used in the construction of the building. To the east again of the lime, if he dug down to the depth of half a metre, he would find a heap of money, sufficient to pay for the entire building of the church, including the wages of the workmen employed. The saint told the *farrāsh* that he was to start at once to build the church, and that if he disobeyed his orders he would be killed. Then Māri Mīna el-ʻAgayebi vanished. E

The *farrāsh* set to work to dig up the plot indicated, and found 346
everything as the saint had told him, including the well, which he discovered first.

The church still stands on this spot, but the old *farrāsh* who built it has, of course, been dead for a long time, and since his day the building has been enlarged by one of the Coptic bishops. The well is still to be seen within the precincts of the church. E

Māri Mīna el-ʻAgayebi is a very popular Coptic saint, and he is 776
venerated not only by the Christians, but also by many of the Muslims, who have, so I was told, the greatest faith in him, and who often appeal to him for aid in time of need. E

Egladiūs el-ʻAzab is a saint of great repute. Several churches 776
in Egypt are dedicated to him, and his body lies with those of four 346
other saints in a special edifice set apart for them in a large town 766
in Upper Egypt. The bodies of these five holy men are still in a good state of preservation, though they have all been dead for a long period of time. Each body lies in a coffin. Egladiūs el-ʻAzab was very young when he died, having been killed, so I was told, by the Arabs because he was a Christian. He wears a wide E
ribbon of gold across his breast, and a gold earring in one ear. 769
A special festival is held every year in his honour, for the due celebration of which the people make large quantities of bread, and bring cattle, which are slaughtered at the churches. The bread and meat are distributed among the poor, who flock in great numbers on these occasions to all the churches dedicated to him. E

In a certain village in Asyūṭ Province there is a Coptic church 776
dedicated to Māri Egladiūs el-ʻAzab. A man who lives close to [346]
the sacred building was, on one occasion, entertaining a Muslim E
friend who had arrived from another province. While they were
engaged in conversation together the talk turned on to the subject [688]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

F
C
776
688
of sheikhs, and the Muslim remarked that the Copts had no real saints, but that what they believed about their so-called saints was all rubbish. To this his host replied, "That is not so; we have a celebrated saint to whom the church close by is dedicated." But his guest scoffed at him.

At night, when the Muslim was sleeping in a room in the upper story of the house—his host sleeping on the ground floor—a young man appeared before him, and touched him to wake him from his slumbers. This uninvited guest then seized the Muslim by the throat and asked him how he dared to speak of the Coptic saints in the scornful way he had done.

F
C
776
783
Meanwhile, the host, hearing his guest choking, and crying out, "Leave me, leave me! I am wrong, I am wrong!" rushed up, thinking that he was being attacked by thieves. When he arrived on the scene he found his guest weeping, so he asked him what was the matter. The Muslim then told him of his unexpected visitor, and described his appearance. From the description the host knew that the mysterious person was the great saint himself. So loud had been the cries of the terrified Muslim that the whole neighbourhood had heard him.

On the following morning the now repentant Muslim repaired to the church dedicated to Māri Egladiūs el-ʽAzab, and, with shoes hanging round his neck, knelt before the altar and prayed to the saint, saying, "Pardon me, pardon me, pardon me!" After this he left the church.

Since this visitation of the saint the Muslim, who still remains a follower of Islām, sends every year a gift of wax for the manufacture of candles used in the services held in the church, together with a present of incense.

F
C
783
It must be explained here that it is the custom all over Egypt, when a Copt or a Muslim has committed a wrong against a saint or sheikh, for him to repair to the church or mosque and borrow a pair of shoes such as are worn by the poor *fellāḥīn*. These shoes are suspended by a cord round the neck of the penitent, who must wear them in this way as he kneels before the altar, or *ḳibleh*,[1] as the case may be. As he kneels he must repeat the words "Pardon me," seven, five, or three times, the number of repetitions being decided by the priest or *imām* present in the church or mosque. When this act of repentance is finished the man goes out and returns

F
C
[793]

---

[1] The prayer-niche turned toward Mecca.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927

MR13 Fellahin MR13 ●

Upper Egypt

Ancient Egypt MR5

F A 844 553 846 [983]

festivities connected with the birth of a child took place in ancient Egypt, certainly during the Middle Kingdom, fourteen days after birth, a mother being accounted unclean until she had purified herself with a fourteen days' purification.[1]

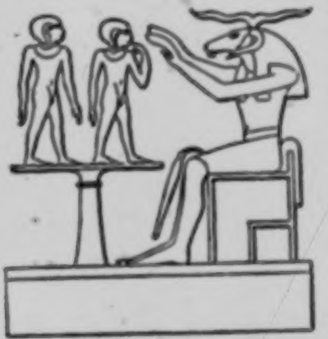


FIG. 158. KHNUM MODELLING THE ROYAL CHILD AND ITS KA

After A. Gayet, *Le temple de Louxor*, Pl. LXIII.

A F 775

A [776]

A F 774 ● 776

I have stated on pp. 67, 99, 100 (see also p. 63) that a belief in reincarnation exists among the *fellāḥīn*. It seems also to have existed among the ancient Egyptians, anyhow in the late New Kingdom, judging from certain episodes in the *Tale of the Two Brothers*.[2]

The statements on pp. 69 ff. about the *ḳarīn* and *ḳarīneh* recall the ancient Egyptian belief about the *ka*. The modern idea that the *ḳarīn* is born at the same time as its human counterpart calls to mind the reliefs in the temples of Luxor and Deir el-Baḥri[3] depicting the god Khnum modelling the royal child and its *ka* (see Fig. 158) and their simultaneous birth.

A [852] [532]

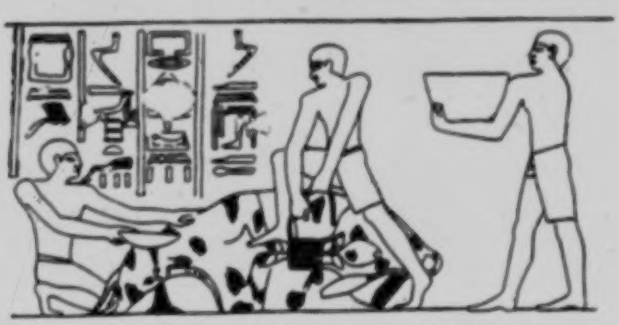


FIG. 159. MAN HOLDING A BASIN AT THE SLAUGHTER OF A VICTIM

After A. M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, Part I, Pl. XI.

000

In modern Egypt a child is suckled for two years (p. 81); in

A [113]

---

[1] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

[2] A. Erman, *ibid.*, pp. 158 ff.; see also Herodotus, ii, 123; W. Spiegelberg, *The Credibility of Herodotus' Account of Egypt*, p. 32.

[3] A. M. Blackman, *Luxor and its Temples*, p. 165.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927

MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5
Graeco-Roman Egypt MR4

F
A
755
789

or other amulets hung round the neck.[1] The collection of charms used by mothers to protect or cure their infants, referred to in note 1 below under the title of *Zaubersprüche für Mutter und Kind* (*Spells for Mother and Child*), dates probably from the Hyksōs period (1788–1580 B.C.); it is preserved in the Berlin Museum. The object of one of the charms in this ancient collection[2] was to protect a child from a spirit of the female sex (possibly, according to Professor Erman, a dead woman), which was trying to take it from its mother. With this idea may be compared, perhaps, the modern one that a child's falling ill is due to the mother's *ḳarîneh* wishing to draw it away from her (p. 72). The spell in question reads as follows:

F
A
[775]
● [776]
[779]

G
[412]
[243]

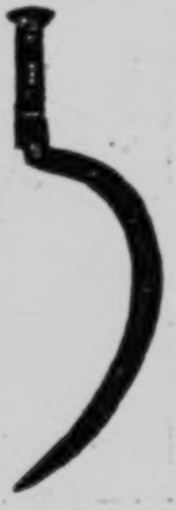


FIG. 186. IRON SICKLE OF ROMAN PERIOD

After A Guide to the Third and Fourth Egyptian Rooms in the British Museum (London, 1904), p. 41.

> Run out, thou [fem.] that comest in the darkness, that slinkest [?] in with nose behind thee and face averted, that failest in that for which thou hast come.
>
> Hast thou come to kiss this child? I will not suffer thee to kiss him.
>
> Hast thou come to kill him? I will not suffer thee to kill him.
>
> Hast thou come to harm him? I will not suffer thee to harm him.
>
> Hast thou come to take him away? I will not suffer thee to take him from me.
>
> I have made his protection against thee with *'fly*-herbs which make . . . [?], with onions which harm thee, with honey which is sweet for mankind and bitter for the dead, with the . . . [?] of the *ibdu*-fish, with the jaw-bone of the . . . [?], with the back of the perch.

F
A
757
759

My accounts of the eye-specialists on pp. 201 ff. and 211 f. may be compared with Herodotus' statement on the subject of Egyptian medicine[3]: "Each physician treats a single disorder, and no more. All places abound in physicians; some physicians are for the eyes, others for the head. . . ."

F
A
[791]

The professions of magician and physician were no less closely

A
[113]

---

[1] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 408; A. Erman, *Zaubersprüche für Mutter und Kind* (Berlin, 1901), pp. 30, 32, 35, etc., and *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 218 and note 6.

[2] A. Erman, *Zaubersprüche für Mutter und Kind*, pp. 11 f.

[3] ii, 84.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13 ●
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

F A

associated in ancient than they are in modern Egypt, as is evident 757
from Dr A. H. Gardiner's illuminating article, "Professional 754
Magicians in Ancient Egypt."[1] It is interesting to note also that 791
the two titles *swnw*, 'physician,' and *sꜣw*, 'amulet-man'—*i.e.*, 'maker' or 'purveyor of amulets'—are borne more than once by the same person.[2]

F A

The necessity for a magician's being clean (p. 186) is strongly emphasized in ancient Egyptian magical texts.[3]

The modern belief that a person can be possessed by an *'afrit* 789
(pp. 231 f.) or a sheikh (pp. 187, 197 ff.) finds an ancient parallel 753
in the tale of *The Daughter of the Prince of Bakhtan and the* 755
Possessing Spirit.[4] The peacemaking feast held by people who 776
have appeased the possessing sheikh (pp. 186, 199 f.) is likewise paralleled in the same story, where we are told[5] that the spirit, while agreeing to leave the princess, demanded that a feast-day be celebrated with him and with the chief of Bakhtan, a demand that was carried out.

F A

The magical ceremony described on p. 188 began with the 789
sweeping of the ground and the sprinkling of water.[6] In ancient 793
Egypt the priest, before beginning the toilet episodes of the temple liturgy, swept the floor of the sanctuary with a cloth.[7] As the king (the high-priest *par excellence*) is shown in a relief in the temple of Derr[8] holding a ewer as well as the cloth used for sweeping the floor, it is highly probable that the priest often sprinkled the floor as well as swept it. It was certainly the custom to sprinkle water while the floor of a house was being swept, as we learn from a wall-painting found by Professor Petrie at el-'Amarneh.[9] With regard to the lighting of a fire and the burning of a hoopoo's feathers (p. 188), it should be pointed out that the ancient magicians also burned various strange substances while pronouncing their spells.[10]

---

[1] *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, vol. xxxix (1917), pp. 31 ff.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 33.

[3] A. M. Blackman, "Purification (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, p. 482.

[4] G. Maspero, *Popular Stories of Ancient Egypt* (London, 1915), pp. 172 ff.; J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records*, vol. iii, pp. 188 ff.

[5] J. H. Breasted, *op. cit.*, § 444.

[6] *Cf.* A. M. Blackman, "Purification (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, p. 482.

[7] A. M. Blackman, "Worship (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. xii, p. 778.

[8] A. M. Blackman, *The Temple of Derr* (Cairo, 1913), Pl. LXIV, left.

[9] W. M. F. Petrie, *Tell el Amarna* (London, 1894), Pl. V.

[10] F. Ll. Griffith and H. Thompson, *The Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden* (London, 1904), pp. 37 ff.

A (113)

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927

MR13 Fellahin MR13 ●
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

On p. 236 I speak of the slaying of a victim on the threshold of a new house and at the installation of a new engine or water-wheel. With this may be compared the slaying of victims—an ox and a goose—at the ceremony of laying the foundation of an ancient Egyptian temple.[1] F A 782 342 [346]

The unwillingness to save a drowning person mentioned on pp. 238 f. may be the last remains of an ancient belief that to be drowned was to "do the pleasure of Rēʿ," and that by being drowned a person was divinized, a belief to which Herodotus refers somewhat vaguely.[2] Professor Griffith wrote a very illuminating article on this subject some years ago in the *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*,[3] and my brother, Dr A. M. Blackman, has also dealt with it at some length in his *Temple of Dendûr*.[4] It is, perhaps, to be remembered in this connexion that, according to more than one account, Osiris himself met his death by drowning.[5] Possibly the water-spirit, who apparently claimed (in the end successfully ?) the foredoomed Prince,[6] is to be compared with the *ʿafrīt* that the modern *fellâḥîn* suppose to be claiming one who is drowning. F A 165 152 776 ● [119]

It is interesting to note that virtue was evidently attached to onions in ancient as it is in modern times (p. 261), for persons who took part in the procession round the walls of Memphis at the annual festival of Sokar, the funerary god of that city, had onions hung round their necks.[7] People also tied onions round their necks on the night preceding this festival.[8] F A 577 824

The love of listening to stories was certainly no less strong in the ancient Egyptians than it is in their descendants, as is shown by the number of folk-tales preserved to us from all periods. The existence of these stories points also to there having been professional story-tellers in antiquity as at the present day (pp. 268 ff.).[9] F A 538

A 113

---

[1] W. von Bissing and H. Kees, *Das Re-Heiligtum des Königs Ne-woser-re*, vol. ii (Leipzig, 1923), Pl. I, Fig. 2.

[2] ii, 90.

[3] Vol. xlvi, pp. 132 ff.

[4] Cairo, 1911, pp. 82 f.

[5] A. Erman, "Ein Denkmal memphitischer Theologie," in *Sitzungsberichte der königl. preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, vol. xliii, 1911, pp. 926 ff.; J. H. Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 25, 41.

[6] T. E. Peet, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. xi, pp. 228 f.

[7] S. Sharpe, *Egyptian Inscriptions from the British Museum and Other Sources* (London, 1837–55), Part II, p. 78.

[8] H. Brugsch, *Hieroglyphisch-Demotisches Wörterbuch* (Leipzig, 1867–80), p. 295; *Thesaurus Inscriptionum Aegyptiacarum* (Leipzig, 1883–91), p. 1144; J. Duemichen, *Altaegyptische Kalenderinschriften* (Leipzig, 1866), Pl. XXVI.

[9] See A. Erman, *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. xxix; W. Spiegelberg, *The Credibility of Herodotus' Account of Egypt*, pp. 30 f.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
ANCIENT EGYPT

000

INDEX OF NAMES

Abdu 'l-Laṭîf, Sheikh, 244 ff.
Abyaḍ, el- (one of the seven kings beneath the earth),[1] 193
Aḥmar, el- (one of the seven kings beneath the earth),[1] 193
Aḥmed el-Bedawî, Sîdî, 205
Ahure, 292
Akhras, el-, 186
Amenemḥêt, tomb-chapel of, 295
Amenôphis, the son of Kanakht, 306
Anii, 286, 289
Anubis, 298

Baraḳân (one of the seven kings beneath the earth),[2] 193
Blackman, Dr A. M., 57, 107, 315
Borchardt, Dr, 306
Breasted, Prof., 300
Butler, Dr A. J., 83

Crowfoot, Mrs, 162

Damradrâg, 207
Darius, 293
David, King, 54, 71
Djefaihap, 300, 309
Duauf, 285

Egladiûs el-'Azab, Mâri, 249 ff.
Erman, Prof. A., 311 f.
Ernûtet (harvest-goddess), 310
Eskhons, 291 f.

Fâṭimeh, Sheikheh, 72

Gabrâîl (the angel Gabriel),[3] 74, 191
Gardiner, Dr A. H., 313 f.
Girgis, Mâri (St George), 257; annual festival of, 258 f.
Grenfell, Dr B. P., 306
Griffith, Prof., 293, 315

Hadrian, Emperor, 290
Ḥaggeh, el-, 186
Harmakhoros, 292
Ḥasan 'Ali, Sheikh, 242 f.
Ḥatshepsut, 287
Ḥenên, 271 f.
Herodotus, 5, 26, 268, 295, 303, 305, 316
Hideyb, 120
Horus, 287, 298

Isaac, 259 f.
Isis, 238, 299

Jesus, 207
Joseph, 33 ff.
Junker, Dr, 291
Juvenal, 302

Kamaleh, 191
Kanakht, 306
Ḳasûra (one of the seven kings beneath the earth),[4] 193
Kha'emḥêt, tomb-chapel of, 310
Khnum, 288
Killmya (leader of the angels in the fourth heaven), 194
Kynebu, 297

FA
171
776

---

[1] Dr G. Scholem refers me to T. Canaan, *Aberglaube und Volksmedizin im Lande der Bibel* (Hamburg, 1914), p. 22, who states that "The tribes of demons are governed by princes. There are seven chief princes. . . . They are called Murrah, Madhab, el-Aḥmar, Barḳân, Shemhûrish, el-Abyaḍ, and el-Meimûn." See also E. Doutté, *Magie et religion dans l'Afrique du nord* (Algiers, 1909), p. 120.

[2] See note 1. Baraḳân, or Barḳân, means 'Shining One.' He appears as Barakon in an invocation addressed to him in the *Clavicula Salomonis*; see H. Gollancz, *Sepher Maphteaḥ Shelomo* (*Book of the Key of Solomon*), *an exact Facsimile of an original Book of Magic in Hebrew* (Oxford, 1914), pp. xii ff.

[3] For the use of his name in charms see F. Lexa, *La magie dans l'Égypte antique de l'ancien empire jusqu'à l'époque copte* (Paris, 1925), vol. i, p. 158; vol. ii, pp. 169 f., 171 f., 174 f., 178, 182.

[4] Otherwise not known. He is not included in the well-known list in note 1.

183
771 "*In sha Allah*".

812 "In sha Allah's no good. We're talking business, and
737 I want a definite promise".

"No *in sha Allah*, no cotton, *ya khawaga*, Good day".

771 'God will provide. God distributes His benefits. God
776 protects the crops. God is with the patient. To everyone
181 the fate which God has assigned him. We are from God, and to God we shall return. God is there. God will give in His own good time. Man proposes and God disposes. God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb.' Such, are the sentences of peasant theology. They encourage fatalism and deepen resignation, but they are often rich with all the splendour of filial obedience to the Divine Will.

776 The fellah believes in God as the Prime Mover and First
812 of all Living. In spite of the poverty of his intellect, and his ignorance in matters of religion, his conception of God is admirably pure. God is the Almighty, the Just, the Good. All attributes are united in the word the peasant uses for God, *Rabbina*, our Lord and Master. To hear a fellah utter this word is to be convinced of his faith.

771 The superstitions which enmesh his soul have not cor-
782 rupted the essence of his faith. The fellaheen are far more
785 given to prayer and asceticism than other people, for they are by nature believers. They have always been powerfully attracted by sacredness (*baraka*), the supernatural, holiness, or even the appearance of these things.

779 The Catholics among the fellaheen, whom the writer
793 knows best, can be splendidly religious in their lives, even to
771 the point of heroism. Those of their priests who are fellaheen live among them and for them with a devotion and self-denial of which missionaries from Europe would rarely be capable. It must not be forgotten that the first monks of the Christian world, the monks of the Thebaid, were fellaheen ([illegible]).

displaced, and that she can by such means put them into their 755
place again.

VIII

"SPLITTING OF THE EYE" (BAZLAT-AL-'AIN)

This is used generally to mean chronic granular ophthalmia. Those afflicted employ for its cure a piece of fleshy red meat[1] which is hung in front of the afflicted eye or eyes.

I do not know any good this piece of meat does except that it quickly becomes a source of putrefaction, and a collector of the [164] different morbid causes which lead to the complete loss of the patient's eye [p. 22].

IX

AMULETS[2]

The common people constantly have recourse to those who 751 monopolize the art of making amulets, in order to obtain help by their means when calamity troubles them and sickness makes them complain. Whenever a person is afflicted by 754 some hysterical weakness or nervous disease, his relatives 753 say of him that he is certainly bewitched, or in possession of a 776 *jinnī*. They do not know even yet that sorcery and the interpenetration of bodies (by evil spirits) are absurd and falsified by all evidence. No intelligent person has ever accepted such things, unless what Hārūt and Mārūt[3] introduced in order to

---

[1] [Sometimes instead, a small bored red bead, usually a carnelian (*'aḳīḳ*) is suspended from the head of the sufferer. Tr.]

[2] [*Tamā'im*, plural of *tamīma*. Tr.]

[3] [These are the names of two rebellious angels of Babylon, who were noted magicians. According to the Koran, ii, 96, the devils at the time of King Solomon taught mankind sorcery "*and what had been revealed to the two angels in Babylon, Hārūt and Mārūt.*" The identification of the names is uncertain. They may be of Zoroastrian origin. Consult the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, *sub voce*; and Horovitz, *Koranische Untersuchungen*, 1926, pp. 146-8. Margoliouth (in the *Moslem World*, 1928, p. 74) endeavours to trace their names to the Jamnes and Mambres or Jannes and Jambres, the magicians of the time of Moses (2 Timothy III. 8), and of the N.T. Apocrypha (Gospel of Nicodemus v. 5). Tr.]

754 mislead people, as is revealed in the Noble Koran. And no
753 one can tell whether the people instructed by *Hârût* and *Mârût*
776 did not divulge this secret through the ages, until sorcery perished along with them, since it was difficult for them to put it into writing.

In the story of John Sîrâf [?] ([illegible]),[1] the prince of sorcerers in the land of the English, who claimed that he was the successor (*khalîfa*) of *Hârût* and *Mârût*, there is much that will convince you of their errors and their lies. [p. 23.] For that person resided in an old castle, surrounded by trees thick with leaves, so that anyone beholding it is made to fancy that it is an ancient cavern over which the ages have passed. Sick people come to him and interview him in a large room, the walls of which are variegated with tapestry of a deep black colour, on which are outlined ugly-looking pictures, at which the joints of the body tremble. They think that they are in the Valley of the Jinn and the Devils. Before long the walls of this chamber split at the four corners, and those present then hear a terrible din, a little after which there are revealed men of ugly appearance and hideous shapes, with drawn swords in their hands. Then what sick person (or "bewitched" according to their opinion) would not be impressed by these phenomena, and his heart be perturbed with fear, due to the deceits of that scheming wretch, especially when the room, in spite of its being so spacious, is lit by a single candle?

Then the sorcerer takes the patient by himself into one of the small rooms from which the assistants have first gone out, and making him sit down, mutters over his head certain names and gibberish which he has fabricated. Next he puts the seal upon these absurdities by giving the patient water which he asserts has a secret power and a hidden influence, one of its peculiarities being that it expels the Jinn from the body and undoes the work of bewitchment. Such were his habits and practices until he heaped up great wealth and acquired large possessions. When he died last year (1891) leaving no heir, the government took over his belongings and gave them to almshouses, and objects of piety and benevolence.

[p. 24.] The North African (or Moorish) quacks have a ready

---

[1] [I have been unable to trace the source of this strange tale. Tr.]

[p. 24] The North African (or Moorish) quacks have a ready market in Egypt because it is the common belief of the deluded people of that land that the Moors have great ability in casting out the Jinn from the bodies of mankind. I saw an example of this two years ago, when I was called in to treat a person suffering from chronic meningitis. Whilst I was with him one day, suddenly those present stood up out of respect. I turned round to know the reason why, and beheld a man, a Moor with a long beard, of a ghastly colour and squalid appearance. He had entered the room, and those present were going up to him and kissing his hand to obtain a blessing thereby. I asked who he was, and was informed that he was Al-Ḥāgg Muhammad of Tlemcen, and that he had been brought in in order to drive out the accursed devil that had entered into the body of this poor wretch, and had made him toss upon a bed of pain and suffering.[1] When I heard this, I said, Allah help us! The Moorish Shaikh then took something out of his bag and threw it into a flaming fire, which they brought him at his request. At once there went up a smoke which almost choked the bystanders. Those who feared for their lives went out of the room, and contented themselves with watching from the door what else might happen. I myself remained, I am glad to say, with the others inside. I saw him after this incensing "operation" arise and approach the patient, and tie one of his big toes with a thread of silk, the end of which he himself held in his hand. Next he began saying to those present, "Verily the *jinnī* which is in the patient, is one of the children of the unbelieving kings, and he will only go out from the body by being condemned and despised and ill-treated. So it is you, who are here present, who must beat him." He pointed to the sick patient, and two of those present [p. 25] procured pieces of cane, bared their forearms and began beating him furiously, whilst he was crying for mercy and groaning. And the wonder of it was that the father of the poor fellow, who had up till then been treating him with clemency and gentleness, was one of the two who undertook to expel the *jinnī* from the body of the patient, although if they had only known it they were really trying to drive the

756
[764]
755
755
776
[753]

---

[1] [The term generally used to describe such a person is *mu'afrit*, which means possessed by an evil spirit, or *'afrīt*. Tr.]

755 life out of him. As for the Moor, whenever he noticed any
776 slackening or fatigue on the part of these two beaters, he encouraged them to keep on by saying, "The *jinnī* is about to depart. Your sick one will soon be healed by the expulsion of this cursed son of an unbeliever who rebels against the Faith."

Feelings of pity incited me to restrain the beaters from their work, but the patient's father reproached me, and told me not to interfere with what did not concern me. So I returned home, in wonderment at what I had seen.

X

"THE LODGER" (*NAẔIL*)

756 "Said an old hag, There has come to me
787 A *jinnī*, who stays with me as a "lodger,"
[539] Come ye to him, and come again soon,
796 That he may cure your sick!"

A CERTAIN old hag will assert that a *jinnī* keeps her company, and is like a husband to her. Hẹ reveals to her knowledge of the unseen and informs her about all the medicaments that the sick require. There is one such who is famous, an old wife in the Province of Buḥaira, in the village of Ḳahūḳīya, and there is another in the village [p. 28] of Umm Ḥakīm. The former has surpassed the latter, because her *'afrīt* (whom she names Shaikh Sīd Aḥmed) is very pious. Women come to her from all directions, and bring her presents of money. (The money of course which is brought to the Shaikh, is called a *present*, not a *payment*). The procedure is, the "old wife"
755 enters a darkened chamber, locks the door securely, and
776 remains in it for a short time. Then she returns to her clients
787 with some drugs, which she asserts her Shaiṭān (or devil) has
378 requisitioned from remote districts and distant lands by means of his "assistants." She tells them to take these medicaments

because the *Jinn* (lit. the "Helpers") have brought some 755
of them from India, and others from Sind or from the land near 776
to the mountains of Ḳāf,[1] and other such nonsense and absurd- 787
ities, "*as to which Allah has sent down no authority.*"[2] 878

Sometimes certain of the women request her to allow them to enter the darkened chamber that they may participate in the "blessing" (*baraka*) of the *'Afrīt*, to enable them to obtain their ends. (For this she receives another "tip.") One of them thereupon enters the chamber which is pitch black. After a short time she hears either a weak voice, or a loud one which utters the name of her sick one, or her own name, if she be the patient, and explains to her the date of the illness which has afflicted her or her sick one. It assures her that its "helpers" have undergone great suffering and distress in the course of producing the beneficent antidote (or rather the maleficent poison) from the ends of the inhabited world, and that the invalid will be cured after a few days.

[p. 29.] The truth of the matter is that the ill-omened old 756
hag has employed certain women (who consider themselves brokers or traffickers, and so on, and who have the entrée into every house) as her spies to bring her news of patients in every village and hamlet, and the date of their illness, in full detail, as for example, that no child of such a woman is living, and that so and so is barren, and so forth, according to their methods of deceit and their innumerable ways of stratagem and chicanery.

One of the duties of these women is to advise sick women or others to go to S̲h̲aik̲h̲ Sīd Aḥmed, when such a scene as the one we have described takes place. There is nothing of course in the chamber of the so-called S̲h̲aik̲h̲ except the old woman herself who has already become acquainted with what the spies have conveyed to her, and which she repeats, not in her own voice of course, to the sick woman, or to one of her relatives, who implicitly believes in the S̲h̲aik̲h̲, and impoverishes herself in order to propitiate him.

---

[1] [In Islamic cosmology the mountain range that surrounds the earth. Tr.] [773]
[2] [Koran, xii, 40; liii, 23, etc. Tr.]

778 789 832 without connotation, such as Shamhūrish, Dahinish, and Budūḥ, etc.[1] on a patch of paper in disjointed letters. This clearly demonstrates the way by which they mislead the minds of simpletons. They also order them to burn these as incense with substances known to them, which help, in their opinion, to plant love in the heart. Or they write Rawwāsh ibn Hawwāsh or Zuḥal (i.e. Saturn), etc. [p. 37] in the manner indicated, and then charge them to fumigate them with herring skin at the time when the people concerned cohabit, if the aim be the creation of hatred and dislike between her husband and the woman he loves and desires. And there is no doubt that quacks such as these are a menace to all praiseworthy characteristics and noble customs, chiefly because by their endeavouring to cause a separation, by means of imagination, between a husband and his deluded wife, they obtain access, in the majority of cases, to the circumstances of the family, in a manner that is other than admirable. [789] This they accomplish because during the shell-divining and bibliomancy and amulet-fabrication they learn the name of the woman, and the names of the members of her family, and their deep secrets. As a result, they do all they can to create mischief and ruin.

778 789 791 The writing of amulets in the villages is not undertaken by Moors only, but there are other individuals who have special haunts which are known to the *fellāḥīn*.

In the neighbourhood of Kôm al-Akhdar in the Buḥaira Province, the reputation of a number of them was spread abroad to the effect that they were able to fabricate amulets and talismans, until the value of one of them was not less than a hundred piastres [a little more than a pound sterling]. They then order the owner of the amulet not to open it, for if he do,

---

[774] [1] [Names of magic import. Shamhūrish, or its variant, Samhūrish, appears in Islamic angelology as the title of a celestial being. There are many such figures, no doubt of Gnostic, or even earlier, origin. E. Blochet in his *Études sur le Gnosticisme musulmane* (in the *Rivisti degli Studi Orientali*, 1909, p. 719 ff.), identifies him with St. George of the Apocryphal Acts. He says (p. 726) that the name has no meaning either in Hebrew, in Aramaic, or in Greek; so he finds an Iranian parallel. But I would suggest that the word ultimately comes from the Hebrew Shemhammephoresh, i.e., the Ineffable Name of God.

[751] [80] As for *Budūḥ*, it is the well-known group of letters often found in Arabic talismanic squares, and still written on envelopes as a prophylactic. The numerical value equals 2468. Tr.]

755 the molten lead was brought, she took it, and after placing a vessel containing water upon the head of the patient, began pouring the lead therein. But Allah ordained that the vessel tilted a little so that the stream of lead fell on the patient's neck and face, and caused wounds which were the cause of disfiguring her for ever afterwards. But the strangest bit of it is that, when the lead fell on her face and the poor girl began to scream and cry for mercy, the "old wife" said to the [776] mother, "The screams you hear are those of the *jinnī* on coming out."

XVI

787 791 [p. 40.] THE MEASUREMENT OF THE ATR[1]

[539]

> "Hark to the words of a hag
> To her patient whose sorrow has departed:
> 'Our Lord the Shaikh has come
> To measure your *Atr* for you.'"

THE monopolizers of this variety of absurdity are the *Faḳīhs*[2] of villages and towns, and the *fellāḥīn* have a true belief in it, without any question of doubt. When one of them is ill his people send his *Atr* to the *Faḳīh* (or *Fiḳīh*) along with some coins (which they call the Shaikh's bribe [*rashwa*]).

---

[1] [The *Atr* (in classical Arabic, *Athar* = vestige, track) is any article of personal property belonging to the sick person, which is taken to the sorcerer in order to assist in "curing" the owner. Generally a handkerchief is used for the trick. The quack ties a loose knot near the end of the handkerchief, [755] and then measures a span with his hand. He grips the other end with his other hand to mark the spot. By a surreptitious pull he can lengthen the space a little between the knot and his hand. Then on a second measurement it is found that the distance has grown, which is indicative of a speedy "cure" and prolonged life. Naturally this is only done when there are chances of the patient's recovery. On the other hand, when the case seems hopeless, the quack safeguards himself by saying that the *Atr* is against him, but that a charm may do the trick. Miss Blackman (p. 185) has a mention of something like this use of the handkerchief but does not give this manipulation which was graphically explained to me by a *Shaikh* from al-Azhar University. Tr.]

[2] [Generally poor village schoolmasters with a minimum of education. The colloquial form is Fi[illegible]. Tr.]

842 Some women who are barren carry a silique of wool dipped in
8[illegible]2 powder of Egyptian natron, and this "prescription" is in
[978] fact, said to be advantageous, when the barrenness is due to the acidity of the fluids secreted by the woman's reproductive organs, for it counteracts its effect, without preventing the male fertile germs, as formerly was the case, from reaching the female generative germ.

XX

THE MUTAʻAWWAḲA

842 755 THIS is the woman who gives birth, but whose children die. The best known "cure" is an "operation" which is performed every year, called "the Cutting of the Follower" *ḳaṭʻ al-tabīʻa*), which is practised by certain special "Old Wives." The manner of it is that the "old wife" comes to the husband and his spouse and makes them stand in front of one another. Then she takes a fowl which is jet black, without the least blemish in it, kills it, extracts its entrails, and plucks its feathers, and cuts a thread which she has previously joined between the thumbs of the husband and his wife. Then she collects all these things for the safety of the woman, and buries them all under the threshold of her room. Thereupon she departs after receiving a weighty reward in compensation for the fowl. By such acts the women believe that the child will live, as if these had [p. 46] a secret influence on its life. It is customary to repeat this experiment at each birth if success follows it the first time. The payment also is increased two, or three, or four fold, and so on, with each successive year, the mother believing that if she does not do so, the "operation" will not succeed in future.

842 776 They explain all this by saying that the husband has a mate (*ḳarīna*),[1] one of the Jinn, who is seized with jealousy

---

[1] [This is a very widespread belief. In most cases, it appears, the "mate" is of the opposite sex. That is, a man is possessed by a *ḳarīna* (fem.); a woman, by a *ḳarīn* (masc.). But there are exceptions noted. Miss Blackman (p. 69 ff.) does not note the sexual difference. Dr. Zwemer, in his work, *The Influence of Animism on Islam*, devotes a complete chapter (VI) to the subject of the *Ḳarīna* or familiar spirit. See below the section entitled "The *Ḳarīna*" p. 46). Tr.]

and envy of the man's wife because she has children. So, to 842
appease this jealousy and love, the *ḳarīna* kills them. To 776
prevent the *ḳarīna* from doing this it is necessary to have
this "operation," which certain of the "old wives" undertake [755]
as a means of obtaining money from the simple and silly ones,
both men and women.

XXI

KILLING OF CHILDREN BY THE INDIGO SPELL

(*Mus̲h̲āhara bi'l-Nīla*)[a]

The women believe that if a woman wearing a dress dyed 842
with *nīla*, i.e. with indigo, enters the presence of a childing 822
mother, the latter will have no more children. They assert 754
that the only "cure" for this is for the mother to visit an indigo dye-house and then she will be all right.

XXII

SPELL CAST BY THE EGG-PLANT

(*Mus̲h̲āhara bi'l-Bād̲h̲ingān*)

Inability to have more children sometimes results from a 824
spell cast by the black egg-plant (*bād̲h̲ingān*) (or *bidingān*) [or 842
Mad-apple, *Solanum melongena*]. The woman who would be "cured" of that has only to visit a field of egg-plants. (Those engaged in the service of the Gardens in Cairo, as in other cities [p. 47] and towns, set aside a part of the enclosure for the growing of the black egg-plant, because they make a lot of money from the visitation of these women to them.)

---

[a] [Indigo (*nīla*) is regarded as ill-omened in Egypt. It is seen at funerals [777]
on the faces and hands of the mourning women. There is a well-known curse in the vernacular, *Gātlak an-nīla* (*al-ba'īd*) = May indigo come to you (present company excepted!) Tr.]

849 Barrenness, they believe, sometimes arises also from the
754 entering in unto the mother of a woman who has weaned her
862 child. The " cure " in this case, according to their statement,
[751] is for the barren woman to carry a rag of wool wet with the
milk of a woman who has recently weaned her child.

XXIII

THE ḲARĪNA

164 THE Bedouins name this the " Heat " (*Ḥarāra*). This name
753 is used generally for the class of diseases of the throat (the
original symptom of which is difficulty in breathing) such as
diphtheria (*k͟hunnāḳ*) and convulsion and drying up of the
uvula, and the like. The " prescriptions " of the " old wives "
757 are self-contradictory in regard to its " cure." Some of them
think that the correct thing is cauterisation [p. 49] of the child
upon its frontal and terminal crown (*yāfūk͟h*). The child,
however, finds relief from their folly, inasmuch as there is
[165] soon set up inflammation of the brain (meningitis), of which it
dies.

[539] " And he who does not die of cautery will die of something
else ;
The " prescriptions " are many but the death is one."

Others again hold to the belief in replacing the cauterisation
by scarifying with a razor instead, on both sides (front and
back). This is the method followed by the Bedouin. The
Arabs of Mariūṭ and al-Ḥāgir instead of all these, bore two
holes in the child's ears through which they pass a thread of
753 red silk. The " old wives " have different absurd theories
776 as to the cause of this disease in children. Some of them
claim that every male child has a sister (*uk͟ht*) among the Jinn,

and every female child a brother (*akhkh*) ;[1] and since the sister 753 loves her brother, this Jinn sister tries to destroy her real 776 brother so that she may enjoy his love. And that is why whenever a mother curses her son she says to him *Ḥabbatak ukhtak* (*may your sister love you*).[2] The only object in cauterizing the child, or scarifying his head with a razor, is to punish [755] him so that his sister may have pity on him and betake herself to her lover among the Jinn that he may leave him to them. Another group assert that " the Mother of Screeching " [*Umm Ḳuwaiḳ*] (i.e. the owl) was in former times a human being, and had a child with whom she was once enraged, so that she beat [773] him so violently and painfully that he died. Then Allah punished her for that, for He changed her from human to animal form, and she has ever since so remained, enraged against the human race from which she was driven out [p. 50], and whose ruin she is constantly endeavouring to bring about, in that at sunset she passes above children, spreading her wings over them and smiting them with this disease. Some people say that one day a certain holy man struck the owl on the head with his hand to make it cease injuring people, but it would not be corrected, and that the black lines on her head are the marks of the fingers of that good man after the blow.

This practice resembles what the people of the Times of 773 Ignorance[3] used to believe long ago in regard to the *Hāma* (a 628 kind of owl), that when the blood of any slain person remained 825 unavenged, there went out from his brow a *Hāma* which kept on screaming out : " Give me to drink of the slayer's blood." As the poet says :

" Oh, 'Amr neglect not my protecting and my wrong, else will I beat thee till the owl cry, ' Give me to drink.' "

---

[1] [Miss Blackman, *op. cit.* pp. 74–75, is seemingly wrong when she states that there is no brother (*akhkh*). Tr.]

[2] [This is another instance of the extensive belief in the *Ḳarīna* (see above p. 44). Dr. Klunzinger (formerly physician at Kosseir on the Red Sea coast) in his work, *Upper Egypt, its People and its Products* (London, 1878), deals with popular medicine on pp. 397–400. On p. 383 he writes, " Even in the official registers of deaths kept by the physicians the *ḳarīna* was till lately a regular variety of disease, exactly corresponding to our convulsions." Tr.]

[3] [The *Jāhilīya*, or Pre-Islamic days. cf. *Acts of the Apostles*, xvii, 30. Tr.]

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XXIV

THE CHANGELING (MABDŪL)

● 776 855 692 783 SOME people say that a child is sometimes a changeling, that is, that the Jinn have substituted it for another, and for this they have two "remedies." In the Buḥaira Province, and its neighbourhood, they put the child, about sunset, inside an oven which has no fire underneath, and close the door tightly, and leave it there until the morning. When they abandon it they say, "God is between us and you; give *us our* son and take *your own.*"

But in Gīza and Benī Suēf, and the surrounding districts, in place of the oven they choose an abandoned tomb, in which no dead person has been buried during a year at least.

These are the two savage methods followed. Often the child dies for want of breath inside the oven, or the tomb; or else some dangerous accident may lead to its destruction.

XXV

[p. 51] "THE FATHER OF FEATHERS" (ABŪ RĪSH)

> "*Oh, Father of Feathers, please God, you will live.*"
> (*Yā Abū rīsh in shāllāh ta'īsh*).

842 751 IF a woman have one child only, and whenever she has another boy or girl it dies, she immediately invokes the aid of an "old wife," one of the sorceresses, who bids her dress the child, who she fears will die, in a great peaked cap,[1] decorated with feathers from a goose or common hen or turkey, and to gird it with a black shawl, and thereafter set it on a black she-ass, with its back to the front. Then the boys and girls of the village, or city,[2] gather round him, and call out with one voice, "*Oh, Father of feathers, please God, you will live!*" They go round the village in this way three times, or even four to make quite sure.

---

[1] [*Tarṭūr*, like a dunce's cap.]

[2] [I have seen such a procession in Cairo near the Citadel. Tr.]

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

757 One of the methods of "cure" is to draw a cross[1] on the temple of the patient with saliva. This way, if it be free from [755] the harm of vein-cutting, is yet a bad innovation, and will not please those who love the Divine Law, because it may give place to the [p. 63] belief of foolish and simple people, instead 751 of to truth and reality. We have even seen many fools who 304 have tattooed[2] crosses upon their temples to guard against the evil of *Ṣudā'*.

755 We shall now mention by way of wonder and curiosity, not without doubt and scepticism, a method of which the success is famous in all parts of Egypt for the "cure" of this disease. It is a charm (*'azīma*) which is recited by His Excellency Mahdī Bey, Treasurer of the Public Debt, and those afflicted with headache are immediately "cured." The matter has been verified by experiments and testified to by eye-witnesses. It has been emphatically stated to me that many from the farthest parts of Egypt afflicted with this ailment used to come to the capital with this object, and would return after having obtained a perfect "cure." All I knew about the effect of the charm upon the sick, was that there was no danger in it to life. It would have been well if His Excellency had explained it and imparted it to people in whose veracity one could rely. It is indeed, His Excellency's duty towards humanity in view of the affliction of those tormented with this very oppressive ailment.

---

[1] [Many Moslem women wear crosses, or hang them on their children to [751] drive away evil spirits, or *'afārīt*. At first sight it appears strange that Moslems should be found wearing the Christian emblem. But it is really a [776] case of sympathetic magic. The evil spirits are conceived as being of Christian origin and therefore unwilling to approach anyone protected by Christian [789] symbols. Miss Blackman, *op. cit.*, p. 65, has apparently overlooked this explanation. The old story of St. Dunstan driving away the Devil by means of a horse's shoe, the devil's own emblem is a similar case. I am indebted to Miss A. Gibson, M.A., formerly headmistress of the Scottish School for Girls in Alexandria, Egypt, for this reference. We still use horse shoes for good luck without thinking of their long folk-history. For the prophylactic value of the cross among Moslems reference may be made to F. W. Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans*, I. pp. 30–31. Tr.]

[2] [For examples of tattooing amongst certain Egyptian lower-class types, see article in the *Bulletin de l'Institut d'Égypte*, vol. V. (1923). Willmore, *Spoken Arabic of Egypt*, pp. 364–5 gives some tattooing superstitions. See also Dr. Fouquet: *Le tatouage médical en Égypte dans l'antiquité et à l'époque actuelle* (*Archives d'Anthropologie criminelle*), Lyon xiii, 1899, p. 270 ff. Tr.]

L 752 for the space of forty days. The true reason for this the ancients did not know (or if they knew it, they did not speak about it, or it did not reach us). But the erudite Pasteur says that in this space is the crisis in which the invalid is between the two states of recovery and danger. F 752 753 171

XXXVI

THE ZĀR

F 755 787 [197] (We do not know the true etymology of the word Zār, whether from Zārā, a town in the North of Īrān; or from Zār, an Arab village East of Yemāma. Most take it from *Ziyāra* [visitation], meaning thereby the coming of the "Masters"[1] into the presence.)

Fortune did not grant us to be eye-witnesses of the ceremony of the Zār so that we might speak of it at first hand, since the Kūdīyāt[2] object to the presence of men or even boys, so we relate this on the authority of the famous authoress [p. 73] Zainab Efendī Fawwāz. It was published in No. 200 of the valuable *Nile Journal* (*Jarīdat-al-Nīl*).[3] She says:

F 756 791 "There is a company of women called Kūdīyāt. They are those who practice the Zār. Such women are the most undesirable and most wicked of charlatans, for they are female quacks. They do things which souls loathe, and at which bodies shudder. As for the women who agree with them they almost worship them on account of the powers to which they lay claim. They even go so far as to believe that if any woman speak in her own home, the *Kūdīya* will hear in her own dwelling. The reason for this is, that the Shaikh or the *'Afrīt* F ● [776] [or demon] who possesses the *Kūdīya*, transmits the words to his devotee. For this reason the woman cannot speak, nor if

---

[1] [i.e. the presiding women who are "possessed" by male spirits. Tr.]

[2] [The chief women of the party (*ṭā'ifa*) of the Zār, or rulers of its meetings (*agwāk*, plural of *gōka*).]

[3] [See M. Hartmann: *op. cit.*, *index*.]

the *Kūdīya* demands anything, can she contradict her, lest the 756
Grand *Shaikh*, under whose jurisdiction the demons [or *'Afārīt*] 791
are, may be angry. And so the woman comes to her husband 776
with bashfulness or with abuse, and if she is able to wheedle anything from him she does so. If not, she must sell something of her own property, and put a stop to the demands of the *Kūdīya*, somehow or other. If she should demand of one of them the performance of the *Zār*, the expenditure will not fall short of twenty or thirty guineas, not to mention trinkets, ornaments, and valuable garments which the *Kūdīya* asks from her, with the statement that the *'Afrīt* [or demon] has come to her in a vision and demanded of her such and such. So the
woman is compelled to yield to the demand for fear that he will [753]
cross her and cast her into sickness."

"Now I shall explain to my gentle readers what I have actually seen myself [p. 74]. On one occasion one of my lady friends invited me to visit her on a particular day because she would perform the *Zār*, and I was most anxious to witness it. I had never seen it, though I had heard about it. When I
entered the place I found a wide court spread with a large
carpet, and along its sides rugs thrown upon the ground, so [352]
that no part was above the other. This was out of respect for the *Kūdīyāt*, who do not like to sit on couches, nor may anyone sit above them. This is done out of obedience to "Religion," seeing that their belief is that what they do is in
accordance with the text of the Divine Law, which just shows [771]
the ignorance of these women and their not studying the facts, [562]
for they know nothing of their Religion except the names of Saints like *Bedawī*, *Rifā'ī*, *Bayūmī*, *Mutawellī*, and other such
names.[1] So if one of them has the least ailment, the *Kūdīya* 755
makes her imagine that *Sīdī Bedawī* or some other will come to 776
her. And everyone knows how much the imagination influ- 756
ences the feelings. So the women seek "blessing" from her, and come to her from all sides, reckoning the honouring of her one of the chief requirements of religion, because there dwells in her body the pure *Sīdī Bedawī*, or *Shaikh Muḥammad*, or

---

[1] [*Bedawī* is the celebrated saint of Ṭanṭā, in the Delta; *Rifā'ī* is buried in Cairo near the Citadel. *Bayūmī* is buried at Huseiniya near 'Abbāsiya, Cairo; *Mutawellī* is the famous *Ḳuṭb* (or "*Pole*") of the *Ṣūfīs* and is supposed to manifest his presence behind the *Bāb al-Zuwaila* in Cairo. Tr.]

755 some other of the saints. All this is the result of ignorance 776 arising from girls not being educated.

756 [Description of the *Zār*.]

"First of all the *Kūdīya* arose and placed a chair in the 755 middle of the room and made our hostess, the mistress of the house, sit on it. She next produced [p. 75] two hens and a 787 cock. She tied the legs of the hens together, placed the cock 782 on her head and the two hens on her shoulders, and began reciting the appointed rigmarole and declaiming verses, whilst the birds for fear of her were screaming and shrieking until the place shook, and all the ladies were stroking their faces and saying: 'Please, oh, Lords! Help, oh, people of Allah! Pity, oh, my Lords!' whilst she was reciting and holding in her hand the drum which is called the *bandīr* in the parlance of the *Ṣūfīs* [lit. the people of the way]. Then she began pounding upon it and uttering incantations after that fashion, until when she ceased she took down the cock and the hens, and went out to the courtyard of the house, and brought in a ram, one of the best, and ordered it to be slaughtered. When it was stabbed she brought forth a dish and caught the blood in it, and ordered the lady to drink some of that blood, and anoint her limbs with it, which she did. We were all looking at what might make one's flesh creep. For we know that blood [784] is forbidden, as much as the dead, or the flesh of the pig. When they were finished with these shocking actions, they [534] surrounded her, having drums, and cymbals (*ṣunūg*) in their hands, and brought her in with, I fancy, greater ceremony than she had at her wedding, smeared as she was with blood in place of the wedding ornaments, until she sat in front of the *Kūdīya* and her followers. All sat in their places, and the ladies who were invited also sat down. The assembly composed itself and coffee was brought in, and they rested for half an hour. Then they took up their drums and began beating furiously with bewildering incantation. Meanwhile the lady was kneeling in front of the drummers with her head upside down [p. 76] on the ground till one of them came with a bundle of clothes consisting of a change of men's clothing, namely, an [292] *'abā'a* [or cloak] embroidered with gold and silver thread in the best style. They opened it and brought out a robe of

1791 he had made up his mind to travel on the morrow to the Nile Valley. Then my heart was aflutter at this news, and I begged him to delay his journey until after the morrow, until I had given him my cash to double. He demurred a little, then after my much pleading, he consented at last. So I handed him all my wealth, the profits of fifteen years, four hundred pounds. He took it and disappeared, and did not return from that time."

LI

THE SHE-MULE OF THE THRONE OR OF THE TENTH (BAG͟HLAT-AL-‘ARS͟H AU AL-‘AS͟HR)

776 789 THERE is nothing more extraordinary than this nonsense. They say that on the night of the twenty-seventh of the month Rajab, or according to others on the night of the *tenth* of the month Muḥarram,[1] as can be gathered from its name, there is to be seen a black she-mule which goes round all the cultivated districts, with a saddle-bag full of gold on her back, and, above the saddle-bag, the head [p. 101] of a slave severed from its trunk. They say that whoever chances upon her, must take what goods are in the saddle-bag and place instead barley for the mule. For this reason the silly ones amongst the country folk spend all their nights awake on the look out for the footprints of the she-mule.

An old man of advanced age (one of those who still trust in this error but who told his story after the manner of a jest) said to me: I was sitting along with three of my companions at the house of a friend of ours in the middle of the road, on the night appointed for the passing of the mule. (It is said that she passes along the best path.) We determined upon spending the whole night in watching. When we were in the last third

---

[805] [1] [The tenth day of al-Muḥarram, the first month of the Moslem year, has a sacred significance amongst the faithful. It is the *‘Ās͟hūrā*, or voluntary fast
[796] day observed by the *sunnīs*, or orthodox Moslems, while on the same day the *s͟hī‘as*, or sectarians of Islam, commemorate the fatal conflict at Kerbela, when
[785] the Prophet's grandson Ḥusain was killed (in A.D. 680).]

of the night and drowsiness was on the point of overcoming us, 776 behold we heard the trample of hoofs near the house, and it 789 suddenly occurred to us that it might be the mule. Our thought was not groundless for we actually encountered a black mule carrying a sack, and in the midst of the sack something projecting which we thought to be the severed head. So the master of the house led the mule to his home (after there was almost a conflict amongst us almost to the shedding of blood, each wanting to take the mule to his home in order to be " blessed " by it, or more likely in order that it might become accustomed to be present every year in his house. The result was that we came to an agreement, through fear of the arrival of some new shareholder who would diminish the shares). So when the mule graced the home of our host he hastened to offer an unstinted measure of wheat and barley as food for the noble animal. Meanwhile one of our friends was judging the sack from its outside appearance. He informed us that it was stuffed with gold dust and not cash. His proof of that was that he bit with his teeth on one of the corners of the sack and the gold dust yielded under his molars. Then the master of the house chid him and said : " Wilt thou scoff at the She-Mule of the Throne ? " Then that fellow answered him by grasping him by the throat, saying : " Wilt thou not be quiet after we have allowed you to have a private view of her noble self, that you seek to fall betwen her and me ! " [p. 102]. Both fell a-boxing until their voices rose and a company of the village night-watchmen assembled. Just then a black servant, a muleteer, appeared, and asked them to stop (saying) : " Did you not see a mule with a sack on its back ? It has strayed from the road and it is loaded with ashes (*ḳuṣrmill*)." Those present were astonished, and for a moment the earth almost shook under us. The people knew our ignorance. But as for the mule, it had finished eating what had been given to it, and the muleteer took it away, laughing at us.

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

832
789
782
[302]
[292]
[276]

The manner of the act was (for the *Shaikha*) to go with the unfortunate woman, whose husband had been turned from her, to a region far from sight where the "operator" (*mushabshiba*) dyes her face and her hands with a black substance and puts on black clothing, and lets her hair down upon her shoulder and grasps in her hand three fruits. Then she takes the "patient" (*mushabshab lahā*) by her side and burns incense, placing in it *hashīsh* and *'anzarūt* (or *Anzarūt*)[1] and *mansir* (?) or *mānistir* (?) and *fahīsala* (I do not know its real medical name). Thereafter she says:

[539]
[776]

Yā 'afārīt yā 'afārīt	Oh, Spirits! Oh, Spirits!
Yā ginn al-gibāl	Oh, Jinn of the Mountains!
Yā sukkān al-buhūr	Oh, dwellers of the seas!
Yā 'ummār al-burūr	Oh, inhabitants of lands!
Yā bu'ād fi'l-barrīya	Oh, far off folk in the desert!
Yā ḳātilīn al-darrīya[2]	Oh, slayers of offspring!
Yā mukhālifīn Sulīmān	Oh, oppcnents of Solomon[3]
Yā mubarṭi'īn fi'l-widyān	Oh, gallopers in valleys!

I cry to you. Come to me, and help me with the stars of the sky.

Then it is said that the atmosphere becomes dusty and the day is changed to night, and the darkness becomes intensified, while she continues her spell, saying:

Good evening to you, oh, stars of evening! Oh, yellow ones like apricots! I have smitten him with three fruits (*thamarāt*) smite ye him with three live coals (*jamarāt*). (Thereupon she names the person in the case, and casts the fruits upon an image [p. 5] of the person made of clay which is in front of her). One ember will come upon his eyes so that he will see none but her [i.e. his forsaken wife]; and an ember upon his tongue so that he will speak with none but her; and an ember upon his ears so that he will listen to none but her. Good

---

[1] [Gum of a thorny tree that grows in the mountains of Persia. See the *Tadhkara* of Dā'ūd al-Anṭākī, s.v. According to Dozy, *Supplément aux Dictionnaires arabes*, it is *trifolium odoratum*. Tr.]

[2] [i.e. *al-Dharriya*.]

[3] [These are the Jinn who, according to Moslem legends, were forced to assist King Solomon in his works of magic. Tr.]

evening to you, oh, our new moon! you whose father is 832
Friday [the Moslem holy day], and whose mother is the Festival! 762
Oh, Glorious Venus with the wakeful eyes! Take for me from 789
the hair of so and so, the son of so and so, three hairs. Pull
them off and mix them and bring them and leave them at the
door of so and so the daughter of so and so. Good evening to
you, oh, Sindās! (Sindās is said to be the name of the god of [776]
lust and debauchery). Oh, Sindās! Oh, Knower of secrets and of . . . (here she names a certain organ of the fair sex, which it is not allowable to mention). (At the same time the Shaikha uncovers her genital organs and brings one of her shoes and beats that organ seven times until its "servant," who is named Sindās, as mentioned above, appears). Oh, Sindās! You have helpers! Oh, Sindās! Where are your brethren! Bring him and bind him and at her door release him! (And hereupon she orders the "patient" to recite the special charm for the purpose, as follows:)

Gāga! Oh, Gāga![1] Decide this matter (*hāga*). Bring him with dust on his head and his shoe in my . . . (and she mentions an expression for one of her members which it is not fitting to mention) and his turban in my girdle (*dikka*), hearing no speech but mine. (Then the Shaikha goes back to the completion of her original spell, and points with her hand to the sky, saying:)

Oh, whirlwind! Oh, clever one! You have satans with you!

Drag him and beat him, and carry him away to the home
of this poor woman, and leave him there. Oh, Ṣābī! [776]
Oh, Ṣābī![2] Oh, Hearer and Answerer! Bring so and so, the son of so and so, improved and not enraged. If he enters, well and good, and if he goes off, well and good. Let my star and his star be with you in agreement!

(At this time, it is said, the "Helpers" [or Jinn] arrive, of various shapes and appearances, and hearken to the commands of the Shaikha and go off in a hurry after paying tokens of honour and respect.)

This is the regular form of the *Shabshaba*. And if the person

---

[1] [Gāga is the goddess of guidance.]
[2] [The name of a king of the Unbelieving Jinn.]

755 out the contents of the egg in the dark place, he takes a lentil grain and places it on a tumour and recites over it this charm : Oh, lentil become a tumour ! Oh, tumour become a lentil !

He then places the lentil inside the egg, and so on until the number of lentils equals the number of tumours. Then he runs in haste to an eastern wall on which the rays of the sun are striking and buries them in it, and the tumours fall away in consequence, in a few days, not exceeding a week. And this is truly beneficial according to the story.

The true explanation. We return, as we already said in
●[774] Part I (p. 27) to the question of demons (*'afārīt*). Often they
(i.e. the " old wives ") assert that the hen (particularly a black
one, since that is mentioned in the " prescription ") has an
obedient servant for herself, her eggs and their possessor, and
by the secret of his influence upon diseases, or by his powerful
relationship with the demon of diseases, the tumours will fall
[753] away. They believe that every disease has a demon, as is
the current creed among the village witches, according to
another opinion.

Often the shrinkage of the vessels feeding these tumours is brought about by a certain degree of imaginative influence. [p. 26.] Then (the tumours) wither gradually, and this is as far as medical explanation of their falling off is possible, if what the narrators say is correct.

XIII

CATARACT AND AMMONIA

181 Egypt is indeed a happy hunting ground for every trader and quack. How simple our Egyptian *fellāḥ* is ! He loses his life and cheapens his body for the experiments of those who trade in spirits. But the *fellāḥ* of Egypt is not to be blamed, for he has no instructor.

164 There came to me one day a patient complaining of his eyes. On examination I saw the left eye-ball protruding from the

THE KARĪN AND KARĪNEH.

[WITH PLATE XIV.]

By WINIFRED S. BLACKMAN.[1]

JUST as I was about to publish the material I have gathered on the question of a 114 "double" in Modern Egypt my attention was drawn to Mr. Hornblower's interesting article on the same subject.[2] During the last three years I have been making very careful enquiries on this point in both Middle and Upper Egypt, my research being carried out very largely among the women. My information differs somewhat from that obtained by Mr. Hornblower, though, as his was obtained in Lower Egypt and [184] mine in Middle and Upper Egypt, the difference in the localities may account for the discrepancies. I should add that the information was given to me quite gratuitously; I tried to avoid asking leading questions, but I would touch on the subject in a [124] natural way when conversing with the women. Also, while listening to their talk, remarks on the "double" would drop out in the course of their conversation. I know how easy it is to make mistakes when trying to get at the truth of such matters, and for this reason I have hesitated to publish anything on this belief until this [124] year, and even now, after trying carefully to verify each point through independent witnesses, I am aware that further study may necessitate a partial revision of what I am stating here.

The modern Egyptian *fellāḥīn* believe in a variety of superhuman beings, most of 776 whom live a subterranean existence, though they may often appear above ground. Among these beings are the *'afārīt* (sing. *'afrīt*) or *ginn*, who have an organized society with a king at their head. These beings are sometimes malevolent, sometimes benevolent, and can be controlled by magicians, both male and female. The [791] "double," which is born with every human being, is quite distinct from the *'afrīt*, and it is called, in the case of a man, the *ḳarīn* (colleague; companion), in the case of a woman, *ḳarīneh*. The man is always born with his male, as is the woman with her female, counterpart. I have not as yet heard this "double" called the *ukht* (sister), though an Egyptian friend of mine, when explaining the word *karīneh* to me three years ago, translated it as "fairy sister." The *ginn*, or *'afārīt*, are often called

---

[1] I desire to thank the Trustees of the Percy Sladen Memorial Fund for the grant made towards my expedition in 1923, while Oxford University Research Student in Anthropology, during which time part of the material on this subject was collected. [122]

[2] "Traces of a Ka-Belief in Modern Egypt and Old Arabia." *Ancient Egypt*, Pt. III, 1923.

776 "our brothers and sisters beneath the earth," but they are separate beings from the *aḳrān* (pl. of *ḳarīn*), though the two communities are in touch with each other.

The *aḳrān* are believed to be of different colours, some being white, some black; their looks also vary, as some are beautiful and some are ugly. This belief is easily accounted for, as each person's *ḳarīn* is a facsimile of him or herself, and doubtless the colours are racial distinctions. The *aḳrān* are not, I believe, always malevolent, though stories of their mischief-making propensities are commoner than accounts of their good deeds.

Not only do the *aḳrān* resemble their prototypes on earth in person, but also in character—in fact, they faithfully reflect in themselves all the actions, both good and bad, of their earthly duplicates. Thus, if a man or woman gets into a temper, his or her "double" does the same; if they suffer pain and sickness, so also does his *ḳarīn*, or her *ḳarīneh*. This point was brought out clearly one day last year when a large number [124] of women had come to see me and to have their eyes doctored. One of them was speaking about her *ḳarīneh*, so I said, "But your eyes are very bad now, what about those of your *ḳarīneh*?" "Oh," she replied, "her eyes are also bad." "Poor thing," I said; "but who is looking after her eyes?" "Why, your *ḳarīneh*, ginab es-sitt," the woman immediately answered.

776 598 789 The following is another example of the intimate connection between a human being and his or her "double." When an argument begins between two or more men or women and a mischievous bystander wants to lead them into a real quarrel, he will take two bricks and place them together thus— , or he will take off one of his shoes and place it on the ground upside down, *i.e.* with the sole uppermost. This will make the disputants quarrel violently, and finally they will resort to blows. As soon as the bricks are taken apart, or the shoe replaced on the foot of its owner, the quarrelling will stop. My informant himself had witnessed an experiment of this kind. A friend of his, seeing two men arguing in the cultivation, placed one of his shoes, sole upwards, on the ground. The disputants immediately started a violent quarrel, hitting out and striking each other. Then the friend replaced the shoe on his foot, and at once the quarrel ceased.

The belief is that when people start quarrelling their *aḳrān* come up above the ground and quarrel too. They are, of course, invisible, but they see the bricks or the shoe, as the case may be, and as long as the bricks remain together, or the shoe remains on the ground, they will continue to fight. As long as the *aḳrān* quarrel, the people to whom they belong must quarrel too.

776 123 787 [761] [791] Again, a man's *ḳarīn* marries the *ḳarīneh* of his wife, and when a man or woman dies, his *ḳarīn* or her *ḳarīneh* dies also. I had been informed of these facts several times, and the reality of the belief was brought home to me in the following way. An Egyptian friend of mine died last year, and I was sitting with his wife one day after his death, when a woman magician came to pay us a visit. I suggested a *séance*, whereupon the magician seated herself in a corner of the room and asked for a blanket

with which she completely covered herself. Presently she clapped her hands two 776
or three times, thus summoning "the brothers and sisters beneath the earth," *i.e.* 123
the *'afârît*. They spoke to her, and after various messages from them had been con- 787
veyed to us through the magician, my friend's wife asked her to enquire what had
become of her husband's *ḳarîn*. "Oh," replied the *'afârît*, "he is dead also, and
your *ḳarîneh* is a widow." The magician was something of a ventriloquist, and her [791]
voice changed completely when the *'afârît* spoke through her.

As I have stated above, the *aḳrân*, besides being like their human prototypes in 776
colouring and physical features, also resemble them in character. The Egyptians
are of a very jealous disposition, and this quality is strongly marked among the [152]
women with regard to the possession of children. Childlessness is a real terror to [842]
them, and the more children they have, the happier they are. Such, at any rate, is
the case among the *fellâḥîn*. They are often very jealous of the offspring of another, [754]
and therefore precautions are taken to protect the children from the ill-effects of the
"evil-eye," or "eye of envy."

A woman's *ḳarîneh* may also be jealous of the human children, in spite of the
fact that if a child is born to a woman the *ḳarîn* or *ḳarîneh* of that child represents the
offspring of the mother's *ḳarîneh*. Various measures are taken to safeguard the human [751]
child from the possible machinations of its mother's "double." Indeed, the mother
herself, during her pregnancy, must also be protected, for her *ḳarîneh*, in a fit [843]
of jealousy, may come at night while she sleeps and strike her "on the belly," thus
causing premature birth. This is curious, as, presumably, the mother's *ḳarîneh* [845]
would also lose her child. But, at any rate in some parts of Egypt, the belief is that
when a child dies it goes to the mother's *ḳarîneh*, who would in this way possess at [775]
least one child, even if her own child (*i.e.* the human child's "double") died at
the same time as its human prototype.

Sometimes the *ḳarîneh* speaks roughly to the expectant mother, but refrains 773
from striking her. In such a case the woman will go at daybreak to see a magician 776
or a *sheikh* and will ask him to write a protection (*ḥigâb*) for her. The protection (or 843
written charm) is the agreement of the *ḳarînehs* with King David—for it happened 751
one day that David saw one of them unfasten her hair, and fire was issuing from her
mouth. So he asked her, "What is your work?" She answered him, "If a woman is [791]
pregnant, I come by night and strike her on her belly, so that she will give birth to a
dead child. And if I do not do this, but allow her to bear the child safely, I may
sometimes come and strike the baby, or cause a snake to bite or a scorpion to sting it,
so that it will die." Then David said to her, "If this is your work I will kill you,"
and he spoke threateningly to her. So she made an agreement with him and said,
"If a mother carries your words on her person I will never do her harm." So David
consented to this suggestion and let her go on her way. Therefore, if a pregnant woman
thinks she has cause to fear that her *ḳarîneh* will do her an injury, she will apply
for a *ḥigâb* and wear it till her child is born, when she will give it to the infant,

773 776 hanging it round its neck till it is seven years old, after which period it will be immune.

[751] [843] The *ḳarîneh* seen by King David was the queen of them all, and the promise she gave is binding on all her subjects. She herself is not, according to my informant, the "double" of any human being; she is by herself, and, like the king of the *aḳrân*, lives for ever.

[304] [751] [761] If a woman's children have died one after the other, soon after they were born, when another one arrives she has it tattooed with a small round spot in the centre of the forehead, while a similar spot is tattooed on the left ankle. After this she believes that her *ḳarîneh* will not attempt to touch her child.

Apparently, during the notable interview between King David and the queen of the *ḳarînehs* the latter promised him that if a child bore these marks she would not touch him or her.

776 753 A *ḳarîneh* may do good or evil to a mother's children till they have passed the age of seven years. She only does harm, so I was told, if the mother has been doing something wrong. For instance, if the *ḳarîneh* clutches a child by the throat, it means that the child's mother has been ill-tempered, and so on.

[755] A man's *ḳarîn* does not affect his children, it only affects him. If he should lose his temper with his wife or family, or with his friends, or does wrong in any way, and goes to bed unrepentant, he may wake up in the morning and find that some illness has attacked him. This has been caused by his *ḳarîn*. When he is sorry and expressed repentance, or has called in a magician, who will give him a charm to wear under his left arm, he will be cured.

776 753 755 778 [789] If a child seems sickly and gets thinner and weaker every day, the mother knows that her *ḳarîneh* is trying to draw her child away from her. Various devices are resorted to in order to mitigate this evil. Near a small village in Asyûṭ Province there is a large stone which is called the stone of the Sheikha Fâṭimeh, who is believed to be buried here. If a child is being drawn away by its mother's *ḳarîneh*, the mother will take it on a Friday to this stone, near which she will place the child, and she herself will stay to watch over it. If the child goes to sleep quietly the mother knows that it will recover, but if it cries and refuses to sleep she takes it home again, knowing full well that it will shortly die. I have myself seen a child lying near the stone fast asleep, with its mother sitting close by. (Pl. XIV, Fig. 1.) [1]

In a village in Middle Egypt there is an old disused graveyard, crowned by the domed tomb of a celebrated local sheikh. The other graves are now fallen into ruin, and many of them show large, gaping hollows. (Pl. XIV, Fig. 2.)[1] A woman whose child is affected by her *ḳarîneh* will take it and place it in one of these cavities, the results being the same as in the case of the stone of the Sheikha Fâṭimeh.

755 A child may suffer from a cough, accompanied by gasping, as if it could hardly breathe. It is liable to such an attack at any time till it has passed the age of seven years. To cure it, the mother or grandmother (either paternal or maternal), or a

[1] [See Category 116, plate facing p. 168--Analyst]

woman friend, will sometimes carry the child early in the morning to a *zirîbeh* made of 755
bûs (dried *dura* stalks) in which the sheep are kept in the field at night. She also takes a knife with her, and, entering the *zirîbeh*, will hand the child over to the shepherd. The shepherd, having placed the child on its back on the ground, will take the knife which the woman brought with her and will place the blunt edge against the child's throat and pretend to cut it. The child will then start crying, upon which the man will remove the knife and return the child to the woman who brought it.
It is believed that good angels watch over the sheep, as they are looked upon [776]
as gentle animals, and that these angels, on hearing the child cry, will drive [825]
away its mother's *ḳarîneh* who has caused the illness by clutching at the [753]
child's throat. According to my informant, this belief is common all over [771]
Egypt. 776

I could quote many instances of illness caused to children by their mother's 753
ḳarîneh during this dangerous period of seven years.

That a woman's *ḳarîneh* may sometimes perform a kindly action is shown in the 776
following belief. One of the many devices resorted to by a woman whose child 775
has died and who has failed to produce further offspring is as follows. The would-be 842
mother will lie down between the lines on a railway track, remaining in this position while the train passes over her. One of the reasons given for this practice is that when a mother is thus frightened her *ḳarîneh* will come to her with the soul of her dead child and cause it to re-enter the mother. This implies a belief in reincarnation, and I have obtained further information which points to a definite belief in rebirth. For an ancient example of belief in reincarnation reference may be made to the well-known Tale of the Two Brothers.[1]

The following is a translation of the written charm worn by an expectant mother 776
who has reason to fear harm being done to her offspring by her *ḳarîneh*. The charm 843
is obviously Coptic, but it is used by Muslim mothers as well as those professing 751
Christianity: "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, for He is a great Lord who created the seen and the unseen things; He whom we cannot see with our eyes, and with whom no evil will dwell; who also knoweth well all things that will happen in the future; to whom all the angels cry, saying 'Hallowed be Thy Name'; from whom all evils fly away; who is praised by all things in the Heaven and all the earth, for He is a mighty Lord. Oh, mighty God, I ask Thee to protect N.N., who is carrying my protection, and protect what is in her womb, and him whom she will nurse with her milk, from the evil *ḳarîneh*, for the sake of Thy mighty ring (*i.e.* the charm square)."

The probable meaning of the square is, so I was told, "Go on Gabriel, go on Michael, go on Raphael, go on [illegible], go on Maniyal, for the sake of our Mighty God,
and burn this *ḳarîneh* in the fire. These are said to be the words of King David. [773]
(Pl. XIV, Fig. 3.)[2]

---

[1] Petrie, *Egyptian Tales*, ii, pp. 16 ff.

[2] [See category 116, plate facing p. 168--Analyst]

114 The beliefs described above differ somewhat from those recounted by Prof. Seligman in "Ancient Egyptian Beliefs in Modern Egypt," in *Essays and Studies presented to William Ridgeway*, Cambridge, 1913, pp. 448–451, and in Mr. G. D. Hornblower's above-quoted article. Both these authorities have obtained their information from men, the former mainly from an educated Egyptian of Luxor, the latter from an aged native of Helwan and from a wise-man of Nezlet Batrān, a village near the Gizeh pyramids. The last-mentioned informant had come in contact with an Italian spiritualist, from whom he had adopted some of his paraphernalia.

776 Prof. Seligman says that, according to the information he obtained, "everyone 114 has an invisible companion of the opposite sex" who is regarded and spoken of as a "sister" or "brother," and that "the death of one or more children in a family [761] is often attributed to the influence of their mother's 'brother' (companion) and the [751] mother and surviving children may wear iron anklets to avert this danger." He goes on to say that, "A variant of this belief asserts that if the child dies while still an infant in arms it is the *qarina* of the mother that is responsible, but the *qarina* of the father causes the death of bigger children" (p. 450).

I have made very careful enquiries into the question of the sex of the mother's "double" from among a variety of people, chiefly women, in Fayûm and Asyûṭ Provinces. So far as my researches have gone, I find that my information on this point differs from that of Prof. Seligman's, for I have been invariably told that a woman has a *ḳarīneh* (the feminine form) and a man a *ḳarīn* (masc.). It will be noted that Prof. Seligman speaks of a "*qarina*" in the case of both men and women. I have not heard the "double" spoken of as either a "brother" or a "sister," such epithets being reserved for the *'afārīt* (sing. *'afrīt*), who, as I stated above, are often called "our brothers and sisters beneath the earth." It is true that, according to my informants, the *aḳrān* also live beneath the earth, but they have a separate social organization to the *'afārīt*.

I also have found that it is the custom for a mother to wear an iron anklet if she [751] has lost all, or most of, her children; or one of her surviving children may wear the iron anklet, which, it is believed, will protect the next child that is born. I have obtained such anklets from a village in Asyûṭ Province and also from one in Fayûm Province. I have always been definitely informed that the father's *ḳarīn* has no influence whatsoever over his children at any age.

Mr. Hornblower also states that, according to his informants, a "sister" is born with every man, though the word *ḳarīneh* (fem. of *ḳarīn*) was not used.

I questioned some of my Egyptian friends in Oxford on this point, and they also declared that according to the belief held by the *fellāḥīn*, a man is born with a *ḳarīneh* and a woman with a *ḳarīn*, thus upholding Prof. Seligman's and Mr. Hornblower's statements. But these Egyptian gentlemen all come from Lower Egypt, [184] so that I think the differences between my information and that of the two above-named authorities may be owing either to difference of locality (for my information was obtained in Middle and Upper Egypt, as, indeed, was Prof. Seligman's), or that it is mere "men's talk," the men possibly preferring to think that their "double" is a female companion, rather than one of their own sex. [176] [114] [184]

In any case, the belief in the existence of this "double," of whichever sex it may be, is widely spread and deeply rooted in the lives of the *fellâḥîn*.[1]

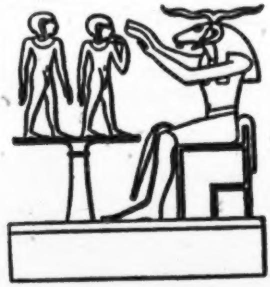


FIG. 1.

The above information is certainly suggestive of survivals of the ancient Egyptian ideas about the *Ka*. The modern idea that the *ḳarîn* is born at the same time as its human counterpart calls to mind the sculptured scenes in the temples of Luxor and Deir el-Baḥri depicting the god Khnum modelling the royal child and its *Ka* (Fig. 1), and their simultaneous birth. [171]

[1] Since writing this article, I have been to Egypt again, and I have found that the belief that the *ḳarîn* is of the opposite sex to its human "double" is more or less confined to the educated classes. Further study on this point goes to prove that my assertion that a man has a *ḳarîn* and a woman a *ḳarîneh* is correct, at any rate among many of the *fellâḥîn*. I have lately come across an interesting variety in this belief, but I hope to investigate it more thoroughly before venturing to publish it. [184]

/80/

Zar in Egypt.

Kawthar Abdel-Rasoul

There is a certain ceremony called Zar among the realm of su- 755
perstitious beliefs in Egypt. This belief is firstly widely disputed among 184
the Egyptians themselves being mainly opposed by men and taking 562
the bulk of its adherents from the masses of women, especially the uneducated ones in the country and the artisans' wives in the towns. We can say that it is certainly not nation wide, but more or less a feminine practice.

Briefly summarizing the whole idea, we can say that it is a be- 755
lief in some spirits who, due to what we cannot say, secretly enter 787
the body of the victim, establish themselves there and cannot be got rid of. The Zar ceremony is performed on those people with the purpose of soothing the spirits and persuading them not to do any harm to the possessed person.

In this paper we shall try to give a short account of the Zar- 128
ceremony and conclude by comparing it with similar practices in the Sudan and Abyssinia.

The Elements of the Zar. 755
753

1. The Patient:

The possessed person is in most cases a woman and only rarely a man. This rule is also applicable in the Sudan and Abyssinia. The patients can be classified as follows:

(a) Women who are physically or mentally ill and have no hope to [158]
be cured by doctors or psychiatrists. As a last resource they turn to the Zar. Such a woman believes a priori that she is possessed by a spirit causing her disease and therefore nothing but the Zar can cure her of it.

(b) Women who give birth to a deformed child or whose babies are [845
stillborn. The Zar-ceremony is performed on them in order to 776]
stop the spirits from doing any more harm to her babies.

533

/81 cont'd/ 534

and was also found in the New Kingdom of Ancient Egypt. 755
It is further known from Abyssinia and Nubia. /82/ 787

(d) the Sutari: a tall slim man, wearing a white "galabiah" and a big leather belt, about 20 cm wide, embroidered with cowrie shells on the upper edge and decorated with about one hundred goat-hooves at the lower edge; in front there are two mirrors. The belt is called "El-Mangur" and fixed tightly around the hips, so that rhythmical twisting produces a distinct rattling sound. (4) This man leads the women in front of him during the dance; he has the same function as the "Abu-el-Leel" dancer. [171] [292] [535]

There are further some women who play the duff and drums and a gourd rattle. (5) This band is specialized on the music of Sultan El-Sudani, the sultan of the red jinn and the Habashi spirits.

All three kinds of band participate in a big Zar. One after the other they play their special tunes and songs. These songs are mostly very primitive. The words refer to the Zar which is performed for the sake of sultan ...., his attention is drawn to the sacrifices and music offered on his behalf and he is entreated to pardon the patient and not to harm her (6) any more.

5. The Sultans or "El-Asyaid" (masters): 753

These are Jinns or spirits; they are, however, never called thus, as they are believed to be the kings and owners of land and sea, according to one of my informants. These spirits are harmful to persons they possess until their desires are fulfilled. As will be seen later on, these spirits may be classified into regional groups or families. Usually a certain group of spirits dwell in one body and it is only rarely that it is inhabited by more than one group. It is believed that a possessed individual will have to stay this way for the rest of his life, for the spirits will never leave him. The Zar-ceremony thus does not aim at getting rid of the spirit, but at inducing him not to harm the person's body, heart and brain. ● 776 [755] [782]

---

(4) Zenkovsky S., "Zar and Tambura in Omdurman", Sudan Notes and Records, vol. XXXI, part I, June 1950

(5) Curt Sachs, p. 26

(6) Ahmed Saleh, Folklore, Cairo 1955, p. 124

776

/82 cont'd/

There are 66 of these sultans, but neither my informant nor any other Kūdiya could cite them all. According to the information obtained by me about the Sultans, their names, characters, and desires, they can be classified as
(a) certain regional groups or families.
(b) spirits of natural or supernatural phenomena.
(c) coptic and islamic spirits.

(a) Regional groups:
1. The Sudanic group, comprising "Sudani Tambura" spirit, "El-Set El-Sudania", his sister.
2. The Abyssianian group comprising "Sultan El-Habash" (Habash is the adjective form of the name Haba'sat. This is a tribe belonging to one of the early and important Semitic migrations to Abyssinia and giving its name to the whole region), "Hawanim -El-Habash" and "Habouba or El-Set-El Kebira" i.e. the grandmother, his sisters.

/83/3. The Egyptian group, comprising "El Sa'idy Abu Denfa (Upper Egyptian) and the "Askari or Lewa", i.e. the soldier or general.
4. The Arabian group: "El-Arabi or El-Badawi"
5. The North African group: "El-Maghrabi"
6. The Turkish group with "Yurra Bey", his sister "Rokash Hanem" and Sultan Mama.

(b) Spirits of natural and supernatural phenomena:
1. The Fire group: "Sultan-El-Jinn-Al-Ahmar" i.e. the king of the red spirits or jinn and his sister.
2. The River or Sea group: "Sultan-El-Bahari", his sister and another female spirit called "Set Safina", i.e. the lady boat.
3. The mountain group: "El Gabalawi" and "Gendar" (7)

---

(7) This may originally have been the name of Gondar town in Abyssinia, one of the centres of the Agau tribe; if this is the case, we can classify him with the Abyssinian group.

/83 cont'd/

(c) Coptic and Islamic spirits: 776

1. Christian: "El-Nasrani" or "El-Dēr", i.e. the monastery
2. Moslem: "Si-Yousef" and "Umm-Nagdi"

Strictly speaking they are not really Coptic or Islamic spirits, because religion has nothing to do with it; we can only classify them thus, because of their names and the characters attributed to them.

There are still some Sultans which cannot be classified at the moment. Further investigation may prove that they belong to one of the above groups. These Sultans are "Katu" (8) and "Rinah".

As related before, the possessed person usually consults the 755
Kūdiya who determines the special spirit in possession of the patient 782
and performs a Zar in order to soothe this spirit. The offerings must [791]
be made different according to the kind of spirit. They can be summarized in the following three items:

(a) Sacrifices of birds, fowls or animals: The Sudanese Sultan re- [825]
quires a black sheep, a black he-goat, or two pigeons of reddish or dark blue colour. The Sultan of the Jinn demands a red cock, a red hen and a red calf. Sultan Rinah must be given a red he-goat and the Gabalawi a red rabbit, a calf or a deer from the mountains. The Arab again desires a camel etc.

(b) Clothes of different kinds of material, shape and colour must be 755
worn during the dance of the Zar-ceremony. In a Zar celebrated 292
for the Sultan of the red Jinn, red silk clothes, red veils and a 776
red head covering must be worn by the possessed person. For the Nasrani spirit a priestly black costume is needed. The Sudanese Sultan Zar necessitates a head-cover knitted with cowries and
blue stones, a belt, bracelets worn on the upper arm and on the [301]
leg just above the ankles, and a stick all covered with cowries and blue stones. In the Sa'idi Zar a galabiah (men's gown in Egypt) and a stick are needed. For the "Askari" or "Lewa" it is best to employ a military uniform or cap, a stick in lieu of a gun, and green or red ribbons. For the "Arabi" bedouin clothes are needed etc.

---

(8) In Sudan there is a Sultan called "Kaltum bint Nub" i.e. Kaltum the daughter of Nubia.

/86 cont'd/ 755
who beat their instruments over the head of the victim until she 786
loses her last restraint and also joins the hysterical group and even- 533
tually falls down totally exhausted. But still the demonic dancer 535
goes round looking for new victims until there is no one left who
can still dance. The music fades away and in one quarter of an hour
the place is silent again. When a lady is exhausted and about to
fall down, she is immediately helped by one of the assistants who
hurries to lay her down, presses her head and says: "I swear to you
King of the earth to forgive this patient and am ready to fulfill all
your demands." The women who had been dancing utter some [198]
strange words in the Zar language which will be discussed later.

After a short interval music and dancing will start again with each band playing for about one hour. The women change into the clothes demanded by every individual spirit. This will go on until midnight or 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning.

Six days later the Kūdiya again goes to the patient's house. In 755
the afternoon she prepares a small kursi with sour milk and different 782
kinds of sweets. Candles are lit until bed-time. Bukhur is prepared
the next day and the Kūdiya unties the handkerchief. During the
following year a goat or sheep must be sacrificed.

/87/ Conclusions:

1. The word: Etymologically the word Zar seems to be derived 755
from the Arabic "Zara" = or "Ziyara" = a visit. It is probably 776
an Arabic loan-word derived from the ancient Agao religion [192]
of the Pagan Kushites of Abyssinia, whose sky-god was called
"Zar." This word is also used by the Christian Abyssinians to
denote evil spirits.

Dr. Cerulli tells us that in Abyssinia the worship of the gods [171]
of the Kushitic tribes was continued by the conquerors who only
later in history brought about some changes. These gods be-
came minor deities or nature spirits, while their former place
was occupied by the gods of the conquerors; thus it happened that

/87 cont'd/ 755
the Agao sky-god Zar became a possessive spirit in the belief 776
of the Abyssinians (15). 171

The word jar is to be found with little variations among the Abyssinians. Jar, among the Bileu, Daro among the Gongo, Yero among the Kafficho; it survived denoting an evil spirit among the Amharic speaking people in Abyssinia, (Zar), as Sar among the Somali tribes and as Jara among the Hadiya. (16)

Contrary to the specialized meanings and precise contents 755
of the word among the different tribes of Abyssinia, we find the 776
word Zar in Egypt, in the Sudan and in Arabia, as a general 177
term designating possessive spirits as well as the ceremonies per- [171]
formed for them. Thus we can conclude that the Zar in the
countries just mentioned was originally derived from Abyssinia.
When a people takes over a cultural phenomenon from an other,
there is a distinct tendency towards generalization. Considering
the great appreciation which the beautiful Abyssinian slave-girls
found in the whole Middle-East, we can assume that they brought
with them both the word and the conception of the "Zar", es- [171]
pecially as we know that many women believe in it in Abyssinia,
in the Sudan, in Egypt and in Arabia.

2. The notion: In Abyssinia as well as in the Sudan, in Egypt and 776
in Arabia there is a notion that these spirits possess human beings, [171]
mostly women and that they never leave a body they inhabit.
The history of this notion is somewhat confused in all countries
with the exception of Abyssinia. There are two stories about the
origin of the spirits told in Abyssinia: (17) One says that Eve
had thirty children and that she hid fifteen of them when God

---

(15) Cerulli, "Zar", Encyclopaedia of Islam, 1934, p. 1217

(16) Trimingham J.S., Islam in Aethiopia, Oxford 1952, p. 257

(17) Leslau W., An Aethiopian Argot of people possessed by a spirit. Africa vol. XIX, No 3, July 1949, pp. 204/212

/87 cont'd/

776

once came to visit her. God knew about this and ordered that the hidden fifteen must stay this way all their lives, i.e. invisible. From these invisible 15 originated the realm of the spirits or masters. It is explained by some people that Eve hid half of her children so that God may not accuse her of lust, while others say that she was afraid of the evil eye. The second story says that emperor Kaleb (18) had thirty children and that he divided his land amongst them. He ordered that half of them should rule the country during the day and the other half during the night. From the /88/ latter originated the realm of spirits.

It is believed in Egypt that each person has a brother or sister in the Jinn realm. In Pre-Islamic Arabia there was a belief or proverb saying that each poet has a brother in the jinn-kingdom who inspires him.

755
171

The present status of Zar-belief is somewhat confused in Egypt, because every cultural element which is introduced into some other country undergoes a number of changes by additions.

3. The elements:

a. the patient: mostly women in Egypt, Aethiopia and the Sudan

b. the Kūdiya: : usually also a woman in all three countries, in Aethiopia called Balā Zar. Her role as a medium is everywhere the same. Her assistants in these countries are her daughter, or relatives and the musicians. [791]

c. The musical band: The instruments are everywhere the same, drums are dominating, but the bands are different. In the Sudan Zar Borri and Tambura are used and the Tambura has greater significance there than in Egypt. The Tambura instrument is kept in a special room and has a special guard. It is never taken to the patient's house, but the patient performs the ceremony in its house. The Zar Borri is considered [534]

---

(18) Emperor Kaleb reigned from 514-542

/88 cont'd/ 755 171

to be masculine, the Tambura feminine (19). Scant knowledge of the bands in Abyssinia forbids further discussion. [534]

d. The sultans: As we have seen there are various groups of sultans in Egypt. In Abyssinia it is believed that living beings are haunted by former Gods degraded to a minor status. In the Sudan it is nearly the same as in Egypt with regard to local spirits, i.e. "Timsah" (crocodile) Turia, Nas-El-Gebal (Turia the people of the mountains) (20). [776]

4. The ceremony: The method of determining the special spirits is different in Egypt and the Sudan. In Abyssinia and the Sudan the Kūdiya orders the musical band to play a special tune for every spirit and the patient sits quietly until she suddenly stands up and begins to dance. This is taken as a sign that the tune of the spirit has inspired and compelled her to dance. The ceremony itself is quite the same as in Egypt, including the demands of the spirits. In Abyssinia blood of the sacrificed animal is drunk. In the Sudan sweets and the bones of the animal are thrown into the river.

5. The Zar-language: There is a special Zar-language to which some Arabic words are added. It seems likely that the Zar-language is a combination of Amharic, Galla and Old-Aethiopian, the dominating language is, however, Amharic. (21) [198] [197]

The Zar, as we can see now, is either a very old practice and belief in the whole area of North-East Africa, or it might have come from Abyssinia. Basically it is formed on the fear of the unintelligible world /89/ and psychological phenomena; it satisfies the unseen powers by offerings. The violent and barbaric dance betrays a very strong African influence, especially the dominance of the 755 781 177 [171]

---

(19) Zenkovsky, S. Zar and Tambura in Omdurman. Sudan Notes and Records, vol. 31, part I, June 1950, p. 73

(20) Ibid, p. 70, and Trimingham J.S., Islam in the Sudan, Oxford 1949, p. 175

(21) Leslau, W. Ibid, p. 210

×539 And when ye sing: "O Moḥammed!",
782 Go ye and come ye [— O Moḥammed].
But whoever fails to say: "O Moḥammed!",
Will lie, some morning, slain [— O Moḥammed],
In the bean-field, [— O Moḥammed],
He and his mother and the wife of his uncle!
[O Moḥammed].

1—4. Invocation of the Prophet Moḥammed.

2. "By Allah" is used to confirm the truth of what follows in the song.

[792] 3. Rāma is, according to Maḥmûd, a name of the mother of the Prophet.

5. Addressed to companions.

[192] [776] 8. "Go ye and come ye" is, of course, to be completed with: bis-salāme, "in safety". The road to the excavations is often long and the peasant-boy's imagination pictures ḥarāmiye (thieves) and 'afârit (evil spirits) lurking about everywhere. There is, in Cairo, a proverb, which runs: kullĕ ḫarâbe we-lina fiha 'afrit, "In every ruined house there lurks for us an evil spirit." In order to understand this proverb, it is necessary to remember, that in the native quarters of oriental cities, [362] [172] half or totally ruined houses are a much more frequent sight than with us. Moreover, Abu Gûrâb (the ruin of the sun-temple, see page II) before our excavations, was regarded as full of evil spirits.

[241] [262] 11. In the spring, wide stretches of land are covered with the tall fûl plant or hog's bean. In Egypt this bean is an important element in the nourishment of man and beast. Compare No. 14, l. 2.

12. He involves with him in his ruin, even his dearest relatives.

And the stone was soft for the Prophet, 539^x
And the roses unfolded for the Prophet, 782
And the pebbles praised God, their Lord:
"All in honor of the Prophet"!

1. "Mine eye" = "My darling"; compare No. 2. Here it is resumed by "boy" in l. 2.

2. The Prophet is the intercessor of man before God, and as such rewards the pious who invoke God's blessing upon him. Compare the same line of thought in No. 4. [776]

3. "The Lord thy God is one God."

4. The pebbles which cover the surface of the desert say: subḥān Allāh, "(I praise) the perfection of God."

7.

The Prophet in the Rose-Garden.

Moḥammed daḫil eg-genēne
wel-wardȇ ḍallil ʿalê.
Be-ṭarfē šālo el-ʾaṣab,
farado we-ṣalla ʿalê.

Moḥammed entered the garden,
And the roses shaded him.
The edge of his shawl was embroidered in gold.
He spread it and prayed upon it.

2. A love-song of Upper Egypt (Qene?), of which Klunzinger (p. 110) gives a translation, begins thus: "I entered the garden and the roses shaded me",

3. The shawl, which is worn wound about the head, as a turban, often serves as a prayer-rug. No Moslem at prayer, would touch the bare earth. He prays upon a little rug, designed for the purpose; upon his cloak, or, as in this case, upon the shawl of his turban. [298]

To the Saint of Ṭanṭa.

× 539
● 776

8.

Es-Seiyid (Master or literally the Master) Aḥmed el-Bedawi 796 is the celebrated saint, whose grave lies in the city of Ṭanṭa [769] in the Delta (compare No. 39). On his birthday (Mûlid), which is celebrated yearly by high masses, a flood of visitors from afar, is drawn hither. In the festal decorations at this time, as on all other such occasions in Egypt, little lamps take a prominent place beside the gay pennants. Ll. 3—5 describe [211] the building covering the tomb of the saint.

Ya Seiyid, yalla ya Seiyid!
Ya bāb in-nabi, ya Seiyid,
Yabu ʿatabe ḫaḍra, ya Seiyid,
Yabu ḍabbe faḍḍa, ya Seiyid,
5 *Yabu bāb mezauwaʾ, ya Seiyid!*
Win ʿišt ana lagī-lak, ya Seiyid,
waʾid ʾanādîlak, ya Seiyid!

O Seiyid, on! Seiyid!
Thou door to the Prophet, O Seiyid,
Thou, with the green threshold, O Seiyid,
Thou, with the silver latch, O Seiyid,
5 Thou, with the gay-colored door, O Seiyid!
And if I live, I shall come to thee, O Seiyid,
And light thy lamps, O Seiyid!

2. The saint is mediator between mankind and the Prophet, as the latter is between mankind and God; compare No. 1, l. 2.

539x
776

9.

A song of Egyptian origin, containing in part the same verses as our own, was communicated to Dalman (Palaestinischer Diwan, p. 141) in Sidon, by a sailor. Of the first verse he remarks: The flag-staff with the crescent, which is mounted over the tomb, is supposed to sway, as a sign that the saint promises to grant the request made to him. [787]

Hizz el-hilāl, ya Seiyid,
yabu bēraʾ nabawi!
Win ʿišt ana, ya Seiyid,
lazūrak sanawi.

Shake the crescent, O Seiyid,
Thou, with the Prophet's flag!
And if I live, O Seiyid,
I shall visit thee yearly.

2. The flag of the Prophet is green, as are the turbans and sometimes even the clothes, of his descendants in Egypt (the Sherifs). [292]

12.

×539

The Transitoriness of Earthly Riches.

To a once-rich but now impoverished beauty. God alone is eternal; earthly glory passes away.

Alla wed-dāim Alla,
Alla we-la dāim ṛēro.
Bēḍa u-fēn ʿabīdik?
Mātu wel-mulkĕ lalla!

Allah, and the Eternal One is Allah,
Allah, and there is nothing eternal beside him.
Thou white maiden, where are thy black slaves?
They are dead, and the kingdom is Allah's!

13.

The Sigh of the Debtor.

[776] Abul'éle el-Ḥosēni is the saint, whose tomb lies in Būlâ' (Bulak), the suburb of Cairo.

Yabu-l-ʿéle, ya Ḥosēni,
Yabu-l-ʿéle, tūfi dēni!

O Abul'éle, O Ḥosēni,
O Abul'éle, pay my debts!

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904

MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

43.

Hard Labor.

x539
461
312

Work at the shādûf (see No. 42) at which the laborer stands up to the waist in water, unceasingly drawing the pail at the end of the lever up and down, is considered one of the hardest of tasks. The songs which they sing while thus employed, of which numbers 42—46 are examples, are usually very melancholy, both in words and melody.

Ḥakamtê̊, ya bēn, bi-šan'i?
baḥbaḥ el-ḫaiye!
La ummė tibki
wa-la 'amme
5 *wa-la ḫaiye.*

Hast Thou resolved upon strangling me, O God?
Loosen the noose!
No mother weeps (for me),
No aunt,
5 No sister.

● [776]

1. "Strangling", namely: from the hard labor. According to Maḥmûd, bēn is a designation for God.

3—5. I, poor fellow, have so little any way. and no one on earth to love me.

Sick with Longing.

90.

539x
832

Yā ma inte wāḥišni,
ya gamīl, we-rūḥi fīk!
Ya me'ānis 'albi, le-mīn aškīk?
aškīk lilli 'ādir, 'ādir yihdīk
5 *we-yballiṛ eṣ-ṣābir amalo.*
Ana ḥāli le-buʿdak lam yirḍīk.

Oh, how lonely thou makest me,
Lovely one, while my spirit is with thee!
O companion of my heart, to whom shall I complain of thee?
I will complain of thee to the Mighty One, — mighty to guide thee [782]
5 And make the patient one attain (the goal of) his hope.
It will not please thee (when thou seest) what is my state because of thine absence.

---

4. Of course God; compare No. 87, l. 2. He, alone, has power, so to guide the girl, that she may finally listen to her lover. [776]

796 [769] while those who have lost some one dear to them recall him or her to their thoughts, proceed to the cemetery (especially the women), stick a palm branch into the grave mound, distribute pastry and alms, and even pass the night there with their family.

The other feast follows three months after. It is called the Great Feast or Feast of Offering, and lasts for four days, but is really the smaller feast. The baking, cannon-firing, receiving of visitors, embracing, congratulating, and dressing go on as at the little feast; the festive gaiety is, however, dulled, and is not so universal as after the Ramadan. The chief ceremony
[782] on this occasion is the eating of "offering flesh" in memory of the offering of Abraham. Every believer *must* have his
[262] piece of meat on this day, and anyone who cannot procure it for himself receives it from his richer neighbours, each of whom offers a sheep for every member of his family. The native Christians abstain from flesh on this day out of
[788] opposition. This is the most brilliant period of the pilgrimage in Mecca.

FEAST OF THE SAINTS.

796 776 In the middle of the month Shaaban, which precedes Ramadan, is celebrated the great annual jubilee (a kind of wakes), when every town that can claim to have had a saint of any note, having chosen him as its patron, honours his memory by some kind of festive demonstration—the saint having been a man gifted by God with miraculous power, not necessarily on account of great piety, but oftener as a compensation for harmless and innocent imbecility. The
[174] ancient Egyptians also had their patrons and protectors, namely, special divinities or forms and varieties of such for
796 particular cities. In Upper Egypt the chief festival is that of the Sheikh Abder-Rahim at Keneh; it is for Upper Egypt
[184] what the celebrated fair at Tantah is for Lower Egypt. The latter is evidently a continuation of the ancient Egyptian feast of Diana at Bubastis, or is analogous to it. From the beginning
[778] of the month onwards some bustle prevails round the temple

796 [521] [526] in conversation, ball playing, and gymnastic exercises, and those whose conscience allows it smell the contents of their dram-bottle as well as the fresh air and roast meat. Health 753 must be inhaled to-day since the five days' period of terror, 796 the time of the *chamasin*, is now at hand. A serpent then [776] wanders over the earth and infects the atmosphere with its poisonous breath, leaving behind small-pox, plague, cholera ("the yellow wind"), and all other varieties of disease. The curse is not removed till Whitsuntide dissolves it.

THE NIGHT OF THE DROP.

796 823 On the 17th of June a "drop" falls (according to the ancients a tear of Isis) into the decreasing waters of the Nile, and impregnates the wonderful stream. Its effect is soon after observed in the dirtier colour of the water, then in its more rapid flow, and lastly in its increase and overflow. On this day, or on the night, the "night of the drop," young and old flock to the banks of the blessed stream.

THE NERUS DAY.

541 On the 10th September, the first day of the Coptic solar year, the river has reached to about its highest point, and on this day—the *nerûs*, the people give themselves up to the pleasures of the carnival. For three days it is all up with the rule of the Turks; every little town chooses for itself in its own way, and from its own midst, a ruler (*abu nerus*), who has a towering fool's cap set upon his head, and a long spectral beard of flax fastened to his chin, and is clothed in a peculiar garment. With a long sceptre in his hand, and followed by a crowd of correspondingly-dressed bailiffs, hangmen, and scribes, he promenades the streets and turns his steps straight to the hall of the chief magistrate. Every one bends before him, the guards at the door make way, the governor of the province or of the town has the humour to let himself be ousted, while the new dignitary seats himself on his throne and holds a most rigorous criminal investiga-

tion, from which even the displaced functionary and his abettors do not escape. The hangman's assistant of yesterday is sentenced to be hanged, the bastinadoer to be beaten, the *bashkatib* or chief secretary to imprisonment, immense taxes are imposed, and all decisions are set down on a sheet of paper. There is no pardon for the condemned unless on the payment of a few piasters as backshish. Thus they move from house to house, the taxes being levied in the form of backshish. Three days does the capricious rule of the ephemeral tyrant last; at length he, that is his dress, is condemned to death by burning, and from the ashes creeps out the slavish Fellah. In the times of good-natured Mohammed Ali the abu nerus is said to have ventured even to approach his throne, but the harmless jest has now fallen a good deal out of practice. The ancients also celebrated feasts when the Nile was at its height, in the month of Tût, as, for instance, that of Hermes on the 19th of this month. The anniversary of the opening of the canal is kept only at Cairo. 541 [182] [171] 527

BIRTH-DAY CEREMONIES.

The monotony of the work-day life of the Mohammedan, interrupted by no Sunday, is richly and agreeably varied by domestic ceremonies and observances. However thrifty or niggardly he usually is, on such occasions he spares no expense. [461]

When the time comes that a child is to see the light the midwife makes her appearance with her seat, and displays the greatest activity on behalf of her suffering charge; female relatives and neighbours also come in crowds to encourage and advise. It is often sought to lighten the difficult task by hanging opium about the mother, or making her eat the drug. The newly-born child is merely dried, not washed, and immediately laid upon a corn sieve; beside its head lies the knife with which the umbilical cord has been cut, and corn is scattered round about. This procedure is intended to drive away the *karina*, that is, the child's evil brother or sister from the spirit realm that always makes its appearance and tor- 844 [278] [776] [753]

844 ments the poor child of humanity till it sickens and falls
[776] into convulsions, which are therefore also called karina (see
[753] chap. vii.). Immediately after the birth the mother receives
melted butter with honey and fenugreek, and instead of
[262] fasting she must daily eat at least a fowl or a good piece of
meat, which her female friends and neighbours give her. On
846 the sixth day the mother in her turn sends these a plate of
kishk (decoction of wheat and sour milk) as a sign that they
are invited for the following day. Above the head of the
sleeping child is placed on this night a pitcher, hung with
[789] gold coins and lighted with tapers, the pitcher being long-necked
(*dorák*) in the case of boys, short-necked (*kulleh*) in
that of girls.

846 On the morning of the seventh day (*yum es-subû'a*) the
852 house is filled with female visitors. The child is placed upon
a sieve, tapers are fixed upon metal plates and on the point
of a sword, and the child is carried in procession through the
whole house, while the midwife scatters *bissle*, that is, wheat,
[782] barley, pease, and salt as provender for the wicked spirits.
[776] The child is shaken in the sieve, being thereby believed to
lose fear for the rest of its life, and its eyes are held up to
the sun to sharpen them. The cymbals and small drums,
the singing and trilling of the women, make the outer world
acquainted with the joy within the house. The guests present
[431] the mother and midwife with money and gold, for which
they distribute parched chick-peas, St. John's bread, and
[262] walnuts.

But the father must also keep the seventh day as a festival,
especially if the child is a boy, though in many cases he does
not dare up till this time to look upon his own child, since
he might possibly, and quite against his will, do some harm
to his tender offspring by a glance of his eye. He invites
his friends to a feast, and entertains them with Koran reading,
zikrs, and similar pious amusements, or sends for instrumental
players, singers, and dancing-girls. The son is brought in a
sieve and shown to the guests, who rejoice with the father,
[431] and perhaps also leave some gifts. A plate of candy-sugar
[553] is now sent to the kadi or some other theologian; he sucks

764 coffin, would be crushed by the clods of earth heaped over it.
This excavation serves only as the entrance to a roomy
earthen vault, hollowed out alongside of it, in which the
body is placed, and is thus protected as well as if in a coffin.
The entrance to the lateral vault is then built up with bricks,
and during this lengthy operation the people standing around
[533] sing the melodious song "God pardon the Mohammedan men
and Mohammedan women, the believing men and believing
women" (*allahu mughfir el moslimin u el moslimat u el
mumenin u el mumenat*). One of the scribes, an imam, a
775 schoolmaster, or the corpse-washer, delivers himself of a short
764 stereotyped funeral discourse, in which the deceased—who is
no doubt straining his ears to listen—is instructed as to what
he is to answer at the examination he will have to undergo
in the coming night. Once more the confession of the Mohammedan
faith is impressed upon him. For there come to
[776] test him two angels of horrid aspect, Nakir and Munkir by
name, and torment him soul and body if he does not stand
on the firm basis of Islam. Lastly, those present whisper
764 the *fatha*, and amid loud invocations to the gracious and allmerciful
One, clod after clod is flung by them into the grave.
The male members of the family who act as mourners place
themselves in a row, receive the consolatory words and handshaking
of the people who have come along with them, and
every one hastens to the place whence he has come.

765 In the night we hear behind the walls of the house of
mourning the shrieking of women, now wound off in the
trochees of a machine in action, anon in the dactyls of
the steam-horse thundering along at full speed, or breaking
up into the indefinite clack of a mill. Briskly is the kettledrum
beaten, and high up, from time to time, like a rocket,
rises a shriek from a hundred throats. The earth gives out
a hollow sound from the stamping of the feet of the filthbesmeared
women. It sounds like an ungovernable outburst
[535] of joy and revelry; it is the corpse dance, through which the
[154] wife gives vent to her stormy grief.

The men, however, pass the "night of loneliness" with
their friends and neighbours before the house or in a neigh-